

CONGRESS  
OF THE UNION OF CZECH  
WRITERS

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1972



REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE UNION OF CZECH WRITERS,  
JAN KOZÁK, AND DISCUSSION SPEECH BY JIRÍ TAUFER

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The Congress of the Union of Czech Writers was held from May 31 to June 1, 1972. The Congress reports and discussion speeches were published in Czech by the Svoboda publishing House in Prague

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CONGRESS REPORT OF THE PRESIDUM  
OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE OF  
CZECH WRITERS.

DELIVERED BY COMRADE JAN K O Z Á K ,  
AT THE CONSTITUENT CONGRESS OF THE  
UNION OF CZECH WRITERS ON MAY 31st, 1972

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Comrades!

We are meeting at our Congress at a time when the Communist Party, and with it the whole society, is purposefully starting to fulfil the important tasks laid down by the general line of the 14th Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. Its realization will result in further improvement in our socialist economy, a further rise in the people's standard of living, in their cultural growth, a further strengthening and closer uniting of our society, a new prosperity of socialist Czechoslovakia.

Three years have passed since the April plenum of the Central Committee of the Party in 1969, which meant a fundamental turn in the policy of the Party and united it again on the principles of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism. The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSC) enjoys the trust of our working people by what it has achieved in the consolidation of our domestic conditions and also in the international position of the Republic. It has again won the respect of our friends in fraternal countries, particularly in the Soviet Union, the greatest bulwark of the socialist world.

In gradually eliminating the damage incurred during the years 1968 and 1969, the most difficult thing appeared

to be normalisation of our cultural life, particularly in the ephere of literature, where opportunist, revisionist, anti-socialist and anti-Soviet counter-revolutionary tendencies and forces made themselves felt most markedly. Alarmists and enemies of our social system prophesied that it would be impossible to consolidate this sphere. Even here, however, their hopes did not last long. The artists' unions which were founded gradually united the artists who remained faithful to socialism.

So that we can go ahead, we want, at today's Congress of the Union of Czech Writers, to deliberate over what happened during the past years, when an open attack on the very socialist foundations of our state was made within the ranks of writers. We want to look truth in the eye, realize the causes and roots of all attempts to disrupt our socialist culture, as well as the share of some writers, critics, literary scientists and publicists in the attempt to bring about counter-revolution in Czechoslovakia.

This analysis is necessary because it is instructive for our road ahead. The Lesson on the Crisis Development in the Party and Society after the 13th Congress of the KSČ is valid in full for the appraisal of our past as writers. Our analysis is based on this. It also contains certain specifics stemming from the violent aggressivity and purposeful counter-revolutionary preparation of some rightist representatives of the former leadership as the Union of Czechoslovak Writers who were reactionary hegemony in the entire sphere of art.

#### I.

Let us first of all ask - how could it happen that the leadership of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers could play such a markedly negative role during the crisis years 1968 and 1969, when antisocialist counter-revolutionary forces were forming and acting quite openly and attempting



to tear Czechoslovakia from the socialist camp? How was it possible to betray the results of the long and sacrificing struggle of whole generations of the most progressive sons and daughters of our nations? To betray the creative heroism of the working class, the farmers and working intelligentsia, led by the KSČ? How could it happen that the period of socialism, which is one of the most glorious in the history of our nations, could be sullied and negated by representatives of the writers organization? How could it come to attempts to liquidate the great social revolutionary changes and again to link our fate with the capitalist states of the West? How could it happen that the former leadership of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers played the role of one of the most aggressive ideological and ultimately also political counter-revolutionary centres?

The analysis and criticism of the past of the writers' organisation, the analysis linked with an outline of the prospect of our tasks cannot stem from literature alone. If we want to be and to remain Marxists, we cannot disregard the negative processes which were latent in our society for a longer time, and which finally burst forth openly.

We must be aware of the dependence of our literature upon this objective social process; this has always applied not only to Czech and Slovak literature. To adopt a reverse procedure would mean to commit the same mistake as Victor Hugo in his ardent, by virtue of facts and noble indignation doubtlessly strong pamphlet - "Napoleon the Small, or the History of a Crime"; a mistake which with great tact was the subject of criticism in Marx's "18th Brumaire". Marx's criticism of the history of the French Second Republic is also the key to a correct interpretation of historic events as products of objective social forces in a concrete phase of the class struggle, enabling really great and elsewhere

again "mediocre and grotesque figures to play the role of heroes".

In historically decisive times the social forces always find their leading representatives. It is natural that also the permanent, directly historic need of the bourgeoisie to weaken and disrupt the revolutionary workers movement, always found the corresponding leading subjects of opportunism of various "faces", who made use of the fact that nowhere does the working class exist in a crystal clear state, but is always more or less exposed to the influence of the petty-bourgeoisie, which in view of the historic development is particularly numerous in this country.

After 1948 the remainders of the bourgeoisie, closely linked with international capital due to more than a century of "tradition of existence", found with the help of the petty-bourgeoisie and their representatives in the trade unions, in the socialist administration and even in the Party, a camarilla, well-known to us from the late Sixties in the CSSR.

However, to limit ourselves only to "bitter and spirited invectives" - to use Marx's words - when appraising the initiators of the disruption of socialist Czechoslovakia towards the end of the Sixties, would mean ignoring that all opportunism and all liquidation tendencies in a revolutionary party are social phenomena.

The class struggle within our socialist society, which in our case has been proceeding in specific and for a long time in concealed forms, made it possible that "mediocre and grotesque figures" played the role of "heroes" and "tribunes" in a luckily not completed reactionary, counter-revolutionary coup. This role is, however, simultaneously defined by the content of the movement, which rightist representatives of Czech and Slovak writers attempted to head at all costs. It was a reactionary and counter-revolutionary movement. They bear full responsibility for initiating and supporting this



movement in every respect.

During the objective course of domestic and international events, conditioned by the class struggle, they served the reactionary social forces to the last breath. In this light we finally see that whole elitist theory of the "spiritual leadership role of the writer in the nation" in its true servile likeness, although very active, rationally thought-out and dangerous. From this ensues that not everything was settled by the emigration of some writers and the disappearance of others into "internal emigration". The class struggle between two worlds, the worlds of socialism and capitalism, which has its repercussion also in this country, continues. It continues especially strongly in the ideological field, and thus also in the sphere of art.

Comrades!

As Marxists we proceed from the historic fact that two trends gradually originated within the bourgeois culture, two literatures. The progressive trend in our national culture gradually gained strength and created the basis for socialist art. An outstanding tradition of Czech progressive literature is that the highest values produced carry strong folk characteristics and those of revolutionary democratism, that it served the needs of national and social liberation of the working people. Therefore, to this day our people, our readers love the works by Božena Němcová, Karel Havlíček Borovský, Jan Neruda and many others. Ever since the October Socialist Revolution became the beacon of humanity and opened a new era of undreamed-of prospects to the artists of the whole world, the traditions of this Czech popular and democratic cultural trend gave rise to the fact that our best artists and writers joined the common battle for social liberation alongside the workers and farmers. The best writers linked their creative work and civic life to the revolutionary

struggle and aims of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.

Our progressive literature embarked on a road shown by the artistically vigorous and intellectually rich socialist avant-garde, represented by such personalities as Jiří Wolker and S.K. Neumann, Bedřich Vaclavak, Ivan Olbracht, Vladislav Vančura, Julius Fučík, Zdeněk Nejedlý and others.

Amidst the difficult class struggles at the time of the pre-Munich bourgeois Republic and later in the fight against fascism, the confrontation of bourgeois politics and the revolutionary avant-garde of the working class showed that the working class, led by the Marxist-Leninist Party, is historically the only destined leader of our nations. The national role and patriotism of the working class, led by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ) becomes evident in the heroic striving for social and national liberation, for permanent guarantees of the freedom of our nations. A pleiad of great writers gathered around the KSČ. Works by such masters as Jiří Wolker, Antonín Macek, Jindřich Hořejší, Ivan Olbracht, Marie Majerová, Marie Pujmanová, S.K. Neumann, Josef Hora, Vítězslav Nezval, Vladimír Vančura, František Halas, Jaroslav Kratochvíl, Konstantin Biebl, Peter Jilemnický and others served the people, showed clearly the social prospects of life, appreciated the strength of human spirit, cultivated the feeling of pride in the struggle for a new world. Their works expanded the emotional wealth of man, his moral humanist qualities, strengthened socialist social awareness and so enriched the national culture with new progressive traits.

It is quite natural that after 1945, after the liberation of our lands by the armies of the Soviet Union, under the conditions of the world-wide expansion of the revolutionary democratic and communist movement, under the conditions of a radically changed balance of the world's class forces in favour of socialism, a new strong source really

sprang forth in our culture, in our literature. It drew upon the folk-roots of our culture, it inspired and helped through prose, poetry and dramatic works to concentrate and unite all the working population around the working class and the KSČ, and to lead it into a successful battle for socialist Czechoslovakia. The first post-war years saw the culmination of the works of a number of those writers who had already linked their life and work with the Party and the people, and whose novels and poems had become part of the "golden treasure" of our national literature. With them marched and worked such artists of the older and up-and-coming generation as Antonín Zapotocký, Vilém Závada, František Hrubín, Jarmila Glazarová, Josef Sekera, Karel Nový, Josef Rybák, Jan Drda, Bohumil Říha, Josef Toman, J.V. Pleva, K.F. Sedláček, Ivan Skála, Josef Kainar, František Branislav and dozens more.

The vigorous rise of literature was accompanied also by the emergence of Marxist-Leninist literary theory and criticism, which was however noticeably weakened during the occupation, when the Party lost such excellent ideological and theoretical workers as Bedřich Václavěk, Kurt Konrád, Jan Krejčí, Eduard Urx, Julius Fučík and others. Zdeněk Nejedlý, Ladislav Štoll, Jiří Taufer, Václav Pekárek and others proceeded in their work from the legacy of the Twenties and Thirties, from the best legacy of the national and socialist literary past, from the Leninist, Marxist class theory.

After February 1948 - at the time of the final political victory of the working class over the bourgeoisie in Czechoslovakia, at a time when the socialist camp was emerging and gaining strength in Central and Eastern Europe, under the leadership of the Soviet Union, at a time when the post-war revolutionary wave came to a peak in the world - the Union of Czechoslovak Writers was founded as an ideological creative organisation; as an institution, whose mission was to help the expansion of socialist literature, to further and protect its interests. It seemed then that the writers'



front was ideologically virtually united. The impact of the socialistically conscious writers and their artistic credit was so strong that it captivated also a number of writers fellow-travellers who were ideologically undefined, without a firm world outlook.

How far-sighted were the voices of representatives of the then revolutionary socialist cultural process, who from the beginning warned: "The fight is not fought through". How prudent was Zdeněk Nejedlý's well-known call for a "realistic approach to the reality of the present socialist epoch", of the present conditions at home and in the world of fighting class forces. It was a demand not to succumb to illusions, but to have trust backed by the historic mission of the working class, by the creation of an organic continuity with our own revolutionary, humanistic, popular socialist legacy, by the spiritual and creative continuity with the great realistic Soviet art, with the entire world-wide great humanistic and socialist bequest. How far-sighted was the warning that writers who hailed the victory of the working class and intended to contribute to socialist culture, were in many cases by no means convinced socialists.

Yes, the battle had not been fought through, neither at home nor in the world. Already in the mid-Fifties, after the ebb of the postwar revolutionary wave, when the power of the mother countries of the bourgeoisie in West had strengthened, at the time of the inflated psychosis of the "cold war", launched by the world camp of imperialism, at the time of a tremendous anti-communist ideological offensive after J.V. Stalin's death, and in connection with the abuse of the criticism of the personality cult by bourgeois and revisionist forces, social tendencies got on the move in many of the young socialist countries, which started to paralyse the historical advance of the socialist forces. They started to impede the natural process in the revolutionary

movement, the process of dealing with its own errors, weaknesses and inconsistencies. The cunningly thought-out revisionist offer of the "theory of bridges between the capitalist West and the socialist East", spread by all mass-media of the West, confused the ideologically unstable people and mobilised the internal hostile forces which were defeated in February 1948 in Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovak, Polish and Hungarian examples confirmed again what a menace the petty-bourgeoisie becomes in times of revolution and immediately after it, if questions of consistent Marxist-Leninist ideology and education are neglected; if in political practice the policy recognizing the historically established duplicity of the petty-bourgeoisie, vacillating between the working class and the bourgeoisie, is not consistently pursued, if the behaviour of the middle strata is approached with high illusions and a vigilant but prudent policy is not pursued, that could make use of the objective position of the middle strata and their connection with the production process, so that, in their own interest, they assert themselves as allies of the working class fighting for socialism. This vacillating of the middle strata was used by the revisionist groups as support and misused for a policy of disintegration, for chaining the petty-bourgeoisie to the reactionary social class forces.

Let us, in this connection, take special note of the Czech and Slovak petty-bourgeoisie which throughout the bourgeois pre-Munich Republic was nurtured and bound by the idealistic Masarykite ideology of "humanitarian democracy", nationalism and social democratism, which for whole decades was politically and culturally orientated to the West. Let us notice the specifics of the Czech petty-bourgeoisie whose outstanding characteristic was supplied by S.K. Neumann in the brochure *The Crisis of the Nation* (1930, pages 21-24). Here are at least a few observations from it: "Its spirit is everywhere with us... he (the petty-bourgeois) is cal-



culating, greedy, egoistic but hypocritical... loathes the rough truth, but crawls before verified pseudo-conceptions, ethical clichés from which he composes his books and concocts his Sunday journalism... He is impressed by popular authorities but he reads and listens with delight to everything that vituperates and degrades them... He is open to innovations but as a rule accepts only the surface of them; what he likes best is to ape - as the petty-bourgeoisie in general - social and intellectual peers... He doesn't want to penetrate to the core of reality by the sober way of scientific investigation, but delights, according to the degree of his intelligence, "in deep thoughts" of philosophizing poets, occultists, mystics or metaphysical philosophers, in all mental frills and opiates... Though being a vulgar materialist in all his life, he loathes historical materialism... needs idealism - patriotic, libertarian social, ethical and ultimately possibly even religious clichés, in order to deceive himself about his noble-mindedness and at the same time to deceive his fellow men in his own interest..."

This always valid characteristic of the petty-bourgeoisie, not only of the Czech one, is very instructive for understanding the events which followed at the turn of the Fifties and Sixties in Czechoslovakia. The shaking of some petty-bourgeois truisms and illusions was reflected also in the ranks of the intelligentsia and those sections of society which in history always caused vacillation in the workers' movement and the communist parties. It became clear already in 1956 that the undigested, unabsorbed revolutionism, not backed by a firm tie with the working class, changes, in politically tense situations, into vacillation, anarchist impatience, into that well-known petty-bourgeois radicalism. All these phenomena showed themselves clearly already at the 2nd Congress of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers in April 1956, where a militant principled stand was taken by revolutionary representatives of writers - Antonín Zápotocký,

Vítězslav Nezval, Ladislav Štoll, Jiří Taufer and others against revisionist and liberalistic utterances and moods, particularly against the programme slogan "writers are the conscience of the nation". Under the pretext of this slogan, some revisionist and vacillating writers arrogated to themselves the right to disagree with and to stand up against the politics of the Communist Party, which they pilloried, which they denied the moral right to the leadership of society. They put this slogan up as a concrete expression of opposition. Many of those who later, during the crisis years, showed themselves as open adversaries of socialism, already then proclaimed themselves to be latter-day Messiahs. It turns out that there was only a difference in the words: "conscience of the nation" - select intellectuals, elevating themselves above all the other strata of the nation, just as did the later "elite".

It was the poet Jaroslav Seifert, an expressive and original artist, who, however, almost in all crisis situations of our nation, opposed its revolutionary, historically progressive forces, who most openly formulated the revisionist, liberalistic theories at the 2nd Congress of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers. It can be said that the pre-history of the 4th Congress of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers of 1967 is rooted in the revisionist liberalistic theories and moods, enunciated at this Congress, and fully corresponding with the behaviour and tendencies of vacillation and deviation of the petty-bourgeoisie from the revolution.

The outbreak of the Hungarian counter-revolution in the autumn of 1956, its unconcealed programme of return to capitalism and bloody terror, the joining up of domestic and foreign reactionary forces on the one hand, and, on the other, the aid of the Soviet Union extended to the Hungarian revolutionary forces, was all very instructive and influenced considerably also the situation in Czechoslovakia. In

its consequences it contributed to a situation that in the agitated petty-bourgeois strata expressions of not yet formulated revisionism became less vocal but did not disappear. At the writers' conference in 1959 there was a strengthening of adherence to the Party in the ranks of writers, in the leadership of the writers, a deepening of the firm ties linking the Union of Writers to the Party, and the Party leadership. This was done however, only in an administrative way - without ideological struggles, without an analysis and criticism of views alien and hostile to the Party.

The process of class struggle between the worlds of capitalism and socialism, however, continued with inexorable logic. The western imperialist centres, organising subversion in socialist countries, learned their lesson from the course and the consequences of the Hungarian counter-revolution. They worked out a new, global strategy and new long-term tactics to achieve the same aims against the socialist countries. They orientated themselves towards a gradual internal disintegration of their directing structure, towards a gradual loosening of ties of the socialist systems, towards a disintegration of the leading role of the Party. Here are already the roots of that tactic of furtiveness, which was used in the Czechoslovak case. Lenin's dictum that "while the proletariat fights for power, the counter-revolution crawls to power" was again verified. The ideological anti-democratic armaments of the "elite", the theory of "convergence of the East and the West" and with it the firmly connected "policy of bridges between East and West" that should have enabled open ideological subversion, the erosion of the key principles of the socialist system and finally its total disruption, was an effective bait.

What did this programme of ideological subversion, fed by foreign and Czechoslovak post-February bourgeois emigrants, especially by Pavel Tigrid in his periodical



"Svědectví" (Testimony), mean for the writers and literature itself?

A number of outstanding literary works, which we have already mentioned, that helped at the birth of a new, socialist society and formed the actual "golden fund" of Czech national and socialist realistic literature, were quite naturally also accompanied by less successful literary efforts. To help at the birth of a new, socialist society meant for literature to depict phenomena of the current social transformations. The writers were faced with entirely new problems, conflicts, new formations of characters appearing during the purposeful, organized building of the society; the writers discovered a new hero, the hero of great constructions, dams, of the revolutionarily changing village. Even many experienced writers let themselves be carried away by a superficial view, by naive illustrations. To master profoundly such a new great theme demanded a creative process full of searching, striving, perceiving and psychological analysis. One of the errors then accompanying literature and paralysing its artistic appeal, was the narrowly understood concept of socialist realism. And it is not accidental that the fiercest dogmatists, who in the Fifties narrowed the creative scope of artists and bear a share of great personal responsibility for the distorted concept of socialist realism, were the petty-bourgeois hangers-on of the revolution, who after the ebb of the revolutionary wave almost at once became "dogmatists in reverse". First of all they distorted the cultural line of the policy of the KSČ and then they started to blame the Party for their own activities. With the same radical petty-bourgeois vehemence with which they imposed upon the writers a narrow interpretation of socialist realism, they later condemned socialist realism, or again, so as not to compromise themselves by an attack on realism, they propagated it in a diluted form in the spirit of Garaudy's interpretation of "realism without limits".

Also many writers, disgusted by their lack of artistic skill, their methodological weakness which they themselves presented as socialist realism, began to turn against socialist realism, without having grasped its methodological essence and that of its world outlook.

The distorted and false interpretation of socialist realism became for the exponents of the most various revisionist theories and tendencies the pretext for an attempt to cut the vein of the whole peoples, democratic and realistic tradition, of everything that formed the foundations of our new socialist literary culture, its theory and criticism. It became the pretext for an attempt to cut the organic continuity with the best legacy of the national past, with these sources and impulses which were provided for our literature by the best works of Soviet literature, the best works of the whole progressive, humanistic, democratic and socialist art. Nothing was easier during this somersault than to throw onto a scrap-heap, along with our national classics of socialist literature, also all the inheritance of the revolutionary world literature, such as the works by Maxim Gorki, Mikhail Sholokhov, Romain Rolland, Henri Barbusse, M.A. Nexö and others.

The bearers of revisionist theories tried to infect the body of our national literature with alien, anti-socialist traditions, hostile to the people, an alien ideological armament. And so at the beginning of the Sixties in the sphere of our culture, of our literature - in connection with the entire attitude, with the whole reaction of the petty-bourgeois strata at the given stage of world class struggle - it came to the appearance of petty-bourgeois writers' groups, to an attempt to force upon our socialist literature, our literary science, criticism and esthetics other traditions, another inheritance, other legacies; legacies of secluded authors, maladjusted personalities, in world outlook profoundly alien.



No longer the representatives of people's and socialist literature, not socialist art, its allegiance to the Party, link with life, its impression on the reader, but traditions of a bourgeois and petty-bourgeois literature of domestic and imported provenance - that was the point.

Let us remember only the attacks and ridicule over works by S.K. Neumann, Vítězslav Nezval, Zdeněk Nejedlý, Alois Jirásek; the discussions about the Thirties on the pages of the Literární Noviny of 1965, with which then the Rudé Právo polemized. Let us remember the publicity of deformed esthetic traditions in Chvatík's treatise on Bedřich Václavek, Milan Kundera's attempts to depreciate Vladislav Vancura's work as a confirmation of a wrong revisionist concept, purposefully emphasizing that art is a subjective affair and not a social one, and thus attacking the Leninist theory of reflection. Let us remember how immediately after the publication of Kundera's book *The Art of the Novel*, at once crowned by all possible honours, a new structuralism comes on the scene that tries to prove and in practice to present art as an autonomous sphere with an esthetic function only, which isolated and absolutized the significance of the inner structure of a work of art, and negated its ideological aspects. The Ústav pro českou literaturu (Institute for Czech Literature) became the home-port for structuralism. Through the activity of this Institute structuralism became a fashionable, almost a monopoly basis of artistic theory and criticism, linking up with the ancient Czech school of apologetics for formalism, elevating form over content. Ideologically it disarmed Marxist criticism and became our specific form of liquidating socialist realism. Many of those who opened the door to revisionist trends in literature had Party membership cards in their pockets. And that made it possible for them to better conceal and cloak the penetration of an alien ideology by socialist, even by Marxist terminology.

Realiser? If so then boundless! With the feeling of being a "spiritual elite", with the feeling of being organisers and creators "of the integration of spiritual forces of the world", the petty-bourgeois writers, and particularly critics and various "workers around literature" reached for the offer of the fashionable literary cult, presented them from the West, for the cult of Franz Kafka's work. It suffices only to glance into the Literární Noviny (Literary News), into the Flamen (Flame) and into other literary periodicals.

At the conference about Franz Kafka's work, purposefully organised with wide international participation at Liblice in 1963, at which, apart from Czechoslovak "kafkologists" headed by Eduard Goldstücker, a number of prominent Western philosophers, writers and literary scientists had the main say, the aim was not a factual appraisal of Franz Kafka's work and personality but a political act. An act, propagating the philosophical category of "alienation" as a lasting product of the contradiction between the individual and society, the contradiction which even seemed to be growing in the socialist society. So there may be no doubts about the integration of Franz Kafka's deeply depressing work into the conscience of the time, Goldstücker said at the conference: "Kafka is topical, also with us, this does not apply merely to the capitalist world". And the well-known Austrian philosopher Ernst Fischer added: "Give him a permanent visa without a time-limit".

Kafkism as a programme of socialist literature! Kafkism as an unbridled infection of the blood-stream of socialist literature, Kafkism, that should have influenced the forming of anti-Soviet ideas of our intelligentsia, in particular of the young generation. Kafkism is a knife to cut the veins of progressive traditions of socialist avant-gardes from the fruits of revolutionary socialist thinking!

Nothing could conceal the attempts at a mésalliance

of Marxism with Existencionalism. The rude polemic with the German comrades drove a wedge between our fraternal relations with the German Democratic Republic. Whether some of the organisers and later propagators and "policemen" over the newly emerging Czech literature were aware of it or not, they fulfilled for our petty-bourgeoisie an order alien and hostile to a class society. Where this ideological subversion came from, they knew very well what was at stake, and they were also able providently to evaluate the significance of the conference. Not accidentally, not without reason do we then meet for the first time with that anticipatory designation, so typical also for the fruits of this subversion, the designation Prague Spring! The Kafka conference and its significance was, after all, welcomed in unison on the pages of the Viennese Tagebuch and the Parisien Les Lettres Françaises as Prager Frühling, Le Printemps de Prague.

## II.

In the atmosphere of the approaching new revisionist wave, in the era of preparations for opening the door to liberalistic-revisionist tendencies, the magazine Plamen played a very negative role. It provided philosophy, criticism and literary works with a platform for spreading ideas endeavouring to liquidate the class approach. With the participation of Western bourgeois philosophers it organised international conferences and symposia where publicity was given to wrong concepts of peaceful coexistence, pacifism, a new leading role of the intelligentsia in society; all in the name of a creative development of Marxism. When philosopher Karel Kosík wrote a comparative study about Kafka and Hasek, in which he drew a direct parallel between Kafka's works and Schweik in the fight against the absurd and for the freedom of the personality, Plamen evaluated this real absurdity as "the ideologically most productive reaction of Marxist criticism to Kafka's work". With its

fight against alleged "conservatism" and for the "thawing of ice", Plamen opened the way to ideological subversion, fulfilled in essence the role of the first Hyde Park in the sphere of philosophy, criticism and literary work itself.

In the midst of the rising revisionist wave in the Sixties, the 3rd Congress of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers was held in 1963 at which a compact, well-organised group of people seized key positions in the leadership, which originally formed around the periodicals Kveten (May), Literární Noviny and the Brno magazine Host do domu (Guest in the House). (Their most significant representatives became Jiří Brebec, Miroslav Holub, Milan Kundera, A.J. Liehm, Arnošt Lustig, Karel Ptáčník, Karel Šiktanc, Jiří Šotola, Iven Klíza, Oleg Sus and others.)

This group, with its fellow-travellers, gained the majority in leading bodies of the Union of Writers and escalated its striving to extricate the Union of Writers from the influence of the writers' plenum and from Party influence. In doing so it misused also means and opportunities provided for the writers by the Party until it finally seized in a sectarian manner the power instruments of cultural policy which were at the disposal of the Union: the publishing house, the press, the periodicals, the influence upon the Czech Literary Fund, Dilis and the like. A medley of various group interests gradually gathered around the publishing house and editorial offices of the Union periodicals, people from the ranks of writers, philosophers, sociologists, economists, historians, publicists, editors and critics, all infiltrated by petty-bourgeois ideas, whose only link among themselves became liberalism. Liberalism, of course, only as a "slogan". Liberalism, the modern feature of which, on the one hand, is leniency and a conciliatory spirit towards all bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideological tendencies and endeavours, towards anti-communism, towards publicity for it



and its assertion - and on the other hand a hostile and intolerant attitude to everything socialist, communist.

"Freedom of the word", "freedom of speech", "freedom of criticism", "spiritual elite", "free cooperation of the best spiritual forces of the world"! These abstract slogans, devoid of class content and highfaluting, concealing the class essence of the social struggle that is going on, these slogans, supplied by the ideological armoury of the capitalist West, but which in reality were demanding free criticism of socialism, free organisation of anti-socialist forces, delighted the petty-bourgeois. How he was elated by them! Let us not forget Neumann's aforementioned typical characteristic of him: "...he loathes the rough truth, but crawls before verified pseudo-conceptions, ethical clichés from which he composes his books and concocts his Sunday-journalism... he needs idealism... patriotic, libertarian, social, ethical and ultimately possibly even religious cliché, in order to deceive himself about his noble-mindedness and at the same time to deceive his fellow men in his own interest..."

It ought to be mentioned that some people erroneously imagined that they were pursuing a national, patriotic policy, while others were in the services of the world bourgeois reaction, well paid by bourgeois newspapers and publishing houses of the "free" world in both popularity and "hard" currency. However, they all played a role being engaged by the world bourgeoisie in the purposeful class struggle.

In the sphere of cultural policy, this liberalisation led to an abrupt rejection of socialist realism and of socialistically committed literature and at the same time to making propaganda and hailing all fashionable trends and theories of bourgeois literature.

As soon as the members of the mentioned groupings



took control of the publishing houses and periodicals, they opened wide the road for absurdity, for alienation and social helplessness together with other literary consumer goods, which in mass satisfied bourgeois taste, such as cynicism, drastic horror stories and pornography. An era began of a great epigonism, which has no like in the history of Czech literature. Let us only recollect how many new Czech "Kafkas" appeared on the book market! It is useless to mention those ephemeral works and authors, for whom epigonism was the easiest way to presume cosmopolitanism. This, however, is again nothing new. "What he likes best is to ape - as the petty-bourgeoisie in general - social and intellectual peers ..." When between the two wars Proust's *Search for Lost Time* and Joyce's *Odyssey* were published in Czech, not without significance for the Czech reader, a literary competition was held by the Melantrich publishing house, in the jury of which was F.X. Šalda, who complained in his *Diary* how many Czech Prousts and Joyces had entered the competition. None of them won the favour of the jury. The prize was given to Ivan Olbracht.

What happened with Marxist criticism in the new situation? As soon as the petty-bourgeois "elite of influence" seized control of the publishing houses and editorial offices, they suppressed it, just as the socialist and realistic works. They silenced Marxist literary science and literary criticism by depriving it of all editorial and publishing facilities. Wherever it was able to appear, it was ridiculed as an alleged guardian of dogmatism and conservatism.

In the Twenties and Thirties, Marxist literary criticism and esthetics reached a high level in our country in both the methodological aspect, extent and importance of the investigated problems. The steadily increasing theoretical knowledge of its representatives - Bedřich Václavěk, Eduard Urx, Kurt Konrad, Julius Fučík, contributed to that,

as well as the extraordinarily important theoretical works of the poet S.K.Neumann, the articles and studies of Dr.Zdeněk Najedlý. These representatives contributed to the application of dialectical materialism in the sphere of esthetics, art and criticism, mainly literary criticism. They had high expert qualification.

Their striving for a concept of criticism as science and as creative work, standing up against the prevailing concept of art, marked to a high degree by subjectivism, belongs to the methodologically most important contributions of the representatives of Marxist criticism. To this question Bedřich Václavěk made his opinion known principally already in 1928.

"Criticism is an expression of judgement over works of art, thus a work of concepts and thoughts. No matter how deeply you penetrate the artist's work, get familiar with it, criticism starts only when you pull yourself away from it and express your experience acquired by living through it through concepts".

A very important trait of Marxist criticism in the period between the two world wars was that it did not limit itself to a mere negation of the bourgeois concept of criticism, but that it put forward its own concept, a system of its own positive values and criteria. It was very significant also from the ideological point of view because it weakened the existing monopoly of bourgeois ideology and philosophy in questions of esthetics, art and literature.

Inter-war Marxist literary criticism conceived literature as an inseparable part of the actual social process and drew attention to its class character. It focused its attention upon the consequences of decisive historic events for the sphere of art and literature, above all upon the significance of the Great October Socialist Revolution for the expansion of a new art - proletarian art. The problems

of this new art were pivotal in the works of Marxist critics, and in connection with them the majority of other questions were also dealt with.

It is above all the question what is the essence of this new art. Marxist criticism replies: it is such an art that consciously serves social revolution, that serves the liberation of the proletariat, the emancipation of labour, and therefore the whole mankind. Progressive art serves the social revolution. It therefore points at the class character of progressive art and the significance of awareness, or, if we put it this way, of the party allegiance of the artists and critics.

How does our literary science and criticism of the Sixties stand the proof, seen from this Marxist point of view? What role did it play in reviewing works of art, of prose, poetry and dramatic writing in the spirit of Party allegiance, in the spirit of requirements for the development of social man and socialist society, in the spirit of the demands of the presently raging class struggle between the world of capitalism and the world of socialism?

It should be said that Marxist-Leninist literary science was almost extinct in the Sixties or was silenced in a sectarian way by self-appointed "owners" of literary periodicals and editorial offices which served the political aims of the leadership of the Union of that time, and the literary grouping around it. Was it not directed against them? It was indeed necessary to negate the high-principled, Party-oriented literary science and criticism which, together with the best popular, realistic and socialist works of art provides a profound source of creative strength and creative socialist impulses.

Literary criticism of that time "tilled its own field" and in its overwhelming majority did the same as the whole petty-bourgeois trend which hitched a ride on a far stronger

objective current of events - it served all fashion trends of the bourgeois class literature.

The petty bourgeoisie dominated the literary science and criticism of those years, which became an extraordinarily effective part of the tongs into which they squeezed the artists who were loyal to socialism. Very often a crisis of values went hand in hand with a crisis of characters. (Let us just recall the incident around Nezval's book of poems "The Great Turret Clock" later opposed so intolerantly by "progressives" like A.J. Liehm and Stanislav Bužín. Or Jiří Brabec's speech at the conference on S.K. Neumann, where he attacked Jiří Taufer whose lecture did not seem to him sufficiently true to principles. Let us remember how Sergei Machonin condemned František Bránslav for his collection of lyrical poems "Praise of the Well".) Many of these theoreticians and critics - of whom many found almost jobs for life in socialist state institutions such as the Institute of Czech Literature - lived through all periods and always remained "in vogue".

We have already mentioned those pugnacious dogmatics who after 1945 narrowed the creative scope of the artist and classified works in the spirit of the most vulgar sectarianism, in order to suddenly change into "dogmatics in reverse" under the new pressure of objective social forces. Many critics of the type of Vladimír Blažek, Miroslav Červenka, Jiří Chaloupecký, Květoslav Chvatík, Milen Jungmann, Vladimír Karfík, Oleg Sus, Milen Suchomel, Jan Trefulka flooded the literary editorial offices, negated all Marxist-Leninist criteria of values and "in new services" opened the door wide to revisionist class criteria that served the bourgeoisie in the contemporary class struggle. They praised the "works" on alienation, "experiments" in absurdity, books on the helplessness of man in socialist society. Some of them defended the sex cult as almost the only expression of man's



self-consciousness, revived mysticism. The catholic stream spread again. Criticism extolled Durych, the emigrant Čep and others. Completely in the spirit of criticism attacking the very essence of socialism, our literary criticism welcomed and celebrated Solzhenitsyn. And, for the same reason, it called directly for his Czech followers, for Czech Solzhenitsyns. That is why they suddenly glorified such authors as Jiří Mucha, Karel Pecka and others.

There is perhaps no need to stress that in Soviet literature, they recognised only those authors who were criticised for their works, and that they complained at the same time that the "thawing of the ice" was going ahead far too slowly in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. They gave the "thawing of the ice" in Czechoslovakia as an example. Let us only remember how many ephemeral, mediocre, or substandard literary works, how many Kafkesque epigones and literary "discoveries" they inflated to almost world dimensions. And so it can be rightly said that the petty bourgeois literary science and criticism of the Sixties played a nefarious role in the development of Czech literature. Its role is perhaps best evaluated by one of the critics when he approvingly says the following about its significance:

"How would dramatists of the kind of Milan Kundera, Václav Havel and Milan Uhde fare were they not backed by some of our critics. Didn't criticism play a certain role from the beginning in pushing such ideologically doubtful values as was Bublík's "Spine" or Mňažko's "Reportage"? We have reasons, also under our Czechoslovak conditions, to affirm along with Maurice Nadeau, that to every important name in our literature the name of a critic or critics could be added, who in some way introduced them into literature to make their importance known..."

x x x



The power machinations of the petty bourgeois "elite" group in the leadership of the Union had of course ample theoretical backup facilities. It was all Robert Kalivoda, Karel Kosík, Ivan Sviták and other ideologists who attempted to crossbreed Marxism with bourgeois philosophical trends. They tried to dilute it and to deprive it of its revolutionary essence, to break it from within. If we want to put the finishing touch to the ideological picture in the sphere of art during the latter half of the Sixties it should be recalled that at the same time as literature was drifting apart from the people and democratic traditions, it narrowed and simultaneously changed its social impact, its social and class function. It aimed at a steadily contracting readership, and no small part of it resorted to the sphere of pseudo-aristocratic exclusivity. By doing this it again developed - with that typical petty bourgeois conceit and simultaneously made propaganda in a really epigonic manner - for imported theories of political and social "elitism", alien to socialist art. What was their essence? This was most precisely formulated by the Austrian Ernst Fischer, one of the "fathers" of the Kafka conference, whose views were published in a long statement in the Literární Noviny: The leading force of society is not the working class led by a Marxist-Leninist party, but only a small part of the intelligentsia composed of creative scientific workers and artists, whose task is to produce a "spiritual unity of the world". Thus a self-appointed spiritual caste.

Part of this unscientific theory became the thesis of a single indivisible culture, of the European and world integration of culture.

The leadership of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers prepared everything to turn the writers' organization into a political staff of the "elite of society" as the opposite pole to the leading role of the KSČ and the working class, which would serve with initiative the plans of the world

bourgeoisie - to corrode the fundamental pillars of socialist states. What was needed for this? A still closer ideological rapport with the bourgeois culture of the West. The game was on.

Already in 1967 only 125 translations from the socialist book production were published, while of the production of capitalist states 253 titles appeared. (In 1968 the number of translations from socialist countries dropped to 92 titles, in 1969 to 55 titles, while that from capitalist states rose to 342) Thus, for every translation from the literatures of the socialist countries there were more than six from capitalist states. Moreover, the translations from socialist countries were mainly classics, children's literature and especially dubious literature, including works by emigrants.

In the sphere of theoretical literature, translations of authors from the socialist countries practically ceased to appear. Instead, the book market was flooded with downright decadent bourgeois literature and with works revising Marxism-Leninism - by Beauvoire, Garaudy, Gide, Sartre: frequent translations of fiction by Albert Camus and others were supplemented with epilogues and invectives against the scientific Marxist world outlook and against the cultural policy of the socialist states, particularly the USSR.

Everything was prepared with purpose and perspective. Prague should have become the place for the 6th international FIT congress, where the official languages were to have been English and French. In January 1967, the leadership of the Union even decided that supplementary courses will be held in French and English for translators and writers who translate from foreign languages, and approved fees for the teachers. What exemplary magnanimity! At the same time it discussed the question of how to materially assist those translators who would help re-interpret, domesticate and actualize Proust, Joyce and the like in our literature.

In this spirit, in the spirit of a closer philosophical, ideological and cultural tie with the bourgeois West, Milan Kundera's initial contribution resounded in the discussion at the 4th Congress of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers in June 1967. It appeared to petty bourgeois intellectuals that the time had come for fomenting a militant psychosis. And so, Milan Kundera tried with unusual emphasis to advance the view at the Congress and before the public that the period after 1948, this era of the rule of the working class in Czechoslovakia, was an era of darkness!

This was said about the historic era in which, under the leadership of the working class and the KSČ, the foundation for the most progressive social system - socialism - was laid, when the working people took all power into their hands, when nationalization was victoriously accomplished, when the organization of cooperatives in villages was completed, when exploitation of man by man was abolished. Kundera proclaimed, fully in the spirit of Fischer's imported theory of the "rule of the elite", the intellectuals as the only leading element in our whole history. According to him, already the revivalists made the question of the very existence of the nation dependent upon the cultural values which the nation should create. And they did not want to measure these values by criteria of their immediate national usefulness but by criteria of all mankind. They wanted to be part of the world, part of Europe and therefore they saw in our own country only smallness, vandalism and restriction, and because "there exists an iron continuity of European thinking, which goes beyond all ideological revolutions", they proclaimed the return to western Europe. Only so, they said, can we again become a cultured nation. Return to the culture of western capitalist Europe! This concept proclaimed by a speaker holding a Communist Party membership card, on the forum of the Union's Congress, was a programme for parting from the family of socialist countries, led by the Soviet Union. This concept

was to the last letter in accordance with Tigris's directives, actualizing in the Czechoslovak situation the imperialist strategy and tactics of internal disintegration of the socialist countries, devised after the failure of the Hungarian counter-revolution.

The anarchist speech of Ludvík Vaculík, full of slander, accusing the socialist system of not having solved a single human problem in twenty years, and containing the first call for social discipline to be ignored was also in conformity with this concept.

The concept was also developed by Ivan Klíma's attack on the control of the information media and the press, demanding free spreading of all kinds of opinions - thus also freedom for attacks upon the very foundations of the socialist society. With this attack against the constitution, the aim was to secure freedom to change the state system with impunity and without prosecution.

Almost all the other contributions in the discussion by the compact although variegated group of "elitists", such as Lumír Čivrný, Dušan Hamsík, Jiří Hanzelka, Václav Havel, Milan Jungmann, Alexandr Kliment, Pavel Kohout, Karel Kosík, A.J. Liehm, Jan Skácel, Jiří Šotola and Jan Procházka, until recently so much despised by the others, were of course in the same revisionist and anti-party vein. According to the degree of intelligence and personal temperament, they elaborated and concretized, in a thoroughly prepared arrangement, the basic ideas of Milan Kundera's pronouncement. Eduard Goldstücker evaluated them on the whole with the words: "I think it outlined and delineated the trend of our work in an excellent way". And so that they could show up against the "light" coming from the bourgeois West the cultural darkness of conditions in the Soviet Union, they stirred up at the Congress, through Kohout's and Kliment's aggressive, theatrical declarations, a planned campaign around the Solzhenitsyn letter. Yes, the future for the



"elitists" now lay elsewhere than some years ago. One of the earlier leading dogmatic sectarians, who according to Kundera was thus responsible for the "era of darkness", A.J. Liehm, put the cards on the table with a flourish when proclaiming: "It is possible, I admit, that it really will be the United States, which, from its position of the richest country in the world, will one day shape the cultural policy of which we are dreaming". (And Liehm consequently ended as an emigrant and a direct imperialist agent in America. He was entrusted with leading the post-August (1968) emigrants in the USA, where, at the same time, he is schooling himself in one of the anti-communist centres, the same one that "prepared" Tigrid for his ideological subversive activity as editor-in-chief of the Svědectví.)

The 4th Congress of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers was not concerned with literature at all. Certain objectively existing negative phenomena in our society, certain problems, which had accumulated and were unsolved and which accompanied the historical revolutionary transformation of the society, referred to by the Party's "lesson drawn from the crisis development", were abused demagogically for public, organized and mass-based attacks against the Party and its leadership and against socialism in general. What was until then taking place more or less covertly in the Union's publications in the form of camouflaged articles, claims, demagogy, accusations, slanders and political implications, now took on a widely-conceived, accurately organized form of a compact public attack against the Party, against the fundamental principles on which our friendship and alliance with the socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union, is based.

An expression and a part of these attacks and an open conflict with the Party and the Czechoslovak government policy, with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries were numerous speeches, especially those of Arnošt Lustig and Pavel Kohout, attacking the foreign policy of the socialist

countries. In a militant way and fully in the spirit of imperialist interests and needs, in the spirit of aggressive zionism, they supported the Israeli government and its armed expansionist aggression against the Arab national liberation movement.

The 4th Congress of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers therefore played a markedly negative role in dynamizing opposition and anti-Party forces and some of its protagonists later became outstanding actors and protagonists of the sad development in 1968 and 1969. The 4th Congress of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers was a programme relying on the theory of the leading role of intellectual elites, on the policy of revision and denial of Marxism, a policy of direct mesalliance with bourgeois ideology and policy, imported for our petty-bourgeois intellectuals. Indeed, literature did not matter at all, what it was all about was an explicit policy of anti-socialist, reactionary orientation, outwardly adorned by philosophical-esthetic rhetoric. This was confirmed by one of the main protagonists, Ludvík Vaculík. In his letter to the election commission of the Writers' Congress in 1969, he says: "As everybody knows, I have been a member of the Union for only two years, and even this was somewhat surprising at that time - practically for one book, but then I could say nothing, I felt being shifted somewhere by the logic of my own action, after A it was necessary to say B, the reasons were political ..." This is an important admission. It proves the abuse made of the soil of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers for a spiritual and political preparation of counter-revolution.

### III.

That which took place publicly at the 4th Congress on a wide platform was the effort of a group of intellectuals and writers to play, in the spirit and according to the needs of foreign orders, a highly active and aggressive political

role beside the Party and against the Party. To change the "élite of influence" into an "élite of power" became a cold rational and pre-meditated counter-revolutionary attempt, which strongly influenced the public and political life in our country until December 1969, until the ending of the existence of the so-called Union of Czech Writers, which had never been approved by State authorities.

In January 1968, at the session of the KSČ Central Committee, changes were made in the Party's leadership. The significance of the January plenum is characterized by the document "Lesson drawn from the crisis development in the Party and society after the 13th Congress of the KSČ." It says:

"The plenum adopted a political resolution, which gave its unequivocal support to the conclusions of the 13th Congress and re-affirmed our adherence to the world socialist system and firm unity with the Soviet Union. It laid down the necessity of raising the unity of the Party, of eliminating mistakes and shortcomings, of strengthening its leading role and the demand of observing Leninist norms, of strengthening the alliance of Czechs and Slovaks through consistent implementation of Leninist principles in the nationality policy, of solving questions of national economy and other tasks so as to ensure the implementation of the 13th Congress.

However, the January plenum revealed also serious antagonistic tendencies. The forces proceeding from the principles of Marxism-Leninism, relying on the resolutions of the 13th Congress and defending the necessity of continuing the set line, were trying to find a reply to topical questions, to eliminate the mistakes of the past, mobilize the entire Party to activity corresponding to the problems matured. On the other side, however -- as confirmed by further development -- a rightist revisionist group was forming already at the January plenum which, under the

disruption of rectifying mistakes was striving for the revision of the general line of the Party, the disruption of the political structure of socialist society in favour of petty-bourgeois unrestricted development and a change of orientation in Czechoslovak foreign affairs."

These forces were given immediate assistance by the rightist group controlling the leadership of the writers' organization. It came out immediately with its revisionist and anti-socialist platform. The Union's leading bodies, its secretariat, the editorial offices of its periodicals and the leadership of the writers' Party organization turned into a political apparatus organizing political pressure campaigns for demands of disrupting the fundamental pillars of socialist order. In this they took advantage most effectively of their influence in the Journalists' Union and in mass communications media, in radio and television. They took special advantage of the fact that they maintained direct communication and close ideological and practical cooperation with revisionist representatives in the leadership of the Party and the government. The revisionist theory of the "rule of the elite" was finding its practical application.

The leadership of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers succeeded in pushing through the demand -- which was not difficult at a time when the right wing in the Party's leadership was giving reasons for the abolition of the principle that all social organizations should be controlled by the Party -- that the Writers' Union should no longer fall under the competence of the Ministry of Culture and that its role as an institutional member of the National Front should be strengthened. And not only its own role, but the role of all artists' unions!

Their reformist representatives established a so-called Coordination Committee, a closely-knit ideological-propaganda body, the brains trust of the counter-revolutionary wave,



an intellectual "cartel of the elite", to ensure mutual support and joint political actions of all cultural institutions controlled by the revisionists. Through the press, radio, television, film and theatre it was able to manipulate public opinion. (The official representatives of the Writers' Union, which had a decisive influence in the Coordination Committee, were Jiří Brabec, Ladislav Fikar, Alexandr Kliment, František Vrba.)

Rightist representatives in the Writers' Union -- with their Party cards still in their pockets -- made it possible for anti-socialist writers, such as Václav Cerný, Josef Hirsšal, A. C. Nor, Václav Renc, Jan Vladislav, to be re-admitted to the Writers' Union. They cooperated closely with the Circle of Independent Writers (in fact a sort of writers' KAN), which shortly after its foundation counted about 80 members. (Its representatives were: Hana Belchradská, Bedřich Fušík, Václav Havel, Josef Hirsšal, Alexandr Kliment, Petr Kopta, Pavel Nauman, Jan Vladislav.)

The rightists, controlling the leadership of the Writers' Union, became one of the main ideological, propaganda and political formations of the counter-revolution, preparing to seize power so as to turn the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, led by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, into a pluralist state, to create a model of "socialism with a human face". Socialism without the leading role of the Communist Party, without the leading role of the working class. How many "faces" of betrayal and disruption, weakening of the revolutionary workers' movement is the bourgeoisie capable of devising! How near was this "socialism with a human face" to the Masaryk-type "humanitarian democracy", so familiar to the Czech petty-bourgeois and so close to him, although its content was the spirit of obdurate class revenge very close to fascism.

The most active members of the leadership of the Writers' Union organized political meetings and witchhunts against

firm and politically-conscious communists. They organized campaigns for their recalling from Party and public functions, for their dismissal from work. They even worked out a list of members of the KSČ Central Committee, whom they accused of conservatism, and demanded their recalling; they organized campaigns for convening an extraordinary congress of the Party and influenced the election of congress delegates. After abdication of President Antonín Novotný they even advocated Eduard Goldstücker, chairman of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers, to become presidential candidate. They unleashed a campaign against the People's Militia, for the authorization of other political parties, especially the Social Democratic Party. At the same time they published articles denying the KSČ the moral right of being the leading force of the nation and the State. Some even published reports of friendly meetings with representatives of the post-February emigration, headed by Tigrid. During the decisive stage of the struggle for overthrow of the socialist order, this ambitious, aggressive political power group began to establish contacts with factories and with rightist representatives of university students through the reformist functionaries of the trade union movement of that time.

A very "revivalist" concert of revisionist attacks against the foundation pillars of socialist society was started in the Literární listy, led by publicist Dušan Hamšík. The most prominent authors, and so called "writer" publicists took part in it alongside the most important revisionist politicians, sociologists, historians, philosophers and economists (Bartošek, Budín, Hübl, Jodl, Löbl, Mlynárik, Selucký, Sochor, Slavík, Sviták, Šabata, Šamalík and others).

A similar "revivalist" role was played by the Brno periodical Host do domu (Kožmín, Blažek, Kříž, Skácel, Suchomel, Sus, Uhde, Trefulka), periodicals Tvář, Sešity,

Orientace etc., which became genuine communicating vessels by appointing their people to editorial boards and councils (e. g. the periodical Reportér). Naturally, a substantial part of this activity in support of the "revivalist process" was abudrate anti-Sovietism, fed by fierce nationalism. What a paradox! Former cosmopolitans and contemporary aggressive Zionists suddenly began to unleash and spread by all means Czech nationalism! Why? Because its edge was directed against the Soviet Union, which is the support, the bastion of the security of the world socialist camp.

Under various pretexts, the leadership of the Writers' Union interrupted all contacts with writers' organizations in the socialist countries, while it organized on a mass-scale trips of its representatives and delegations to the West, especially to the Federal Republic of Germany and to Israel (on May 16, 1968, the Czech part of the presidium of the Central Committee of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers even decided to publish a special issue of the "Jewish Quarterly" magazine and to cover the cost from the foreign department budget for publicity of from the means of the Czech Literary Fund). Dozens of politically-minded bourgeois writers, journalists and philosophers from the West were received at the Writers' Union's Secretariat, a joint line of action was worked out for our and the bourgeois press, which celebrated the representatives of our writers' élite as "national heroes".

Amid this anti-socialist, nationalist and anti-Soviet campaign, controlled directly by well-tried means of psychological warfare, misleading the public opinion with hysteria and at the same time creating an atmosphere of terror, Literární listy published in a special and unprecedented edition of 300,000 copies the counter-revolutionary platform "2000 words". Among other things, this platform contained an appeal to paralyze the country's power organs and set up new ones. The first social guarantors of this political platform, whose



author was Ludvík Vaculík, were the writers Jiří Hanzelka, Miroslav Holub, Karel Kosík, Jaroslav Seifert, Jiří Suchý, Josef Topol, Jan Werich. Later they were joined by scores of others.

Following the Warsaw letter of representatives of five communist parties from the socialist countries, addressed to the leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and pointing to the serious revisionist danger and the endangering of socialism in Czechoslovakia, the editorial board of Literární listy published a special issue, in which many authors (including Askenazy, Čivrný, Daněk, Fikar, Holub, Kriebel, Putík, Smetanová, Šiktanc, Volanská and many others) imbued with hatred to the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries and with "majestic" superiority of our "revived" nations unleashed, together with the other press and mass communications media, television and radio, one of the most intensive nationalist and anti-Soviet campaigns experienced by our nation.

It was no accident that professor Erzezinski, one of the leading anti-communist ideologists of the West, could state in the middle of 1968: "Our opinion is that today, twenty years after the war, political structures are emerging, which have been here before!" This is why the Western bourgeois world was jubilant. It seemed that the long-term strategy of ideological subversion of the "new Eastern policy", worked out after the Hungarian events and so aptly labelled as the "Prague Spring" by Western press after the "Kafka conference" in 1963, the orientation towards a gradual internal disintegration of the leading role of the Party, towards the "rule of the elite", breaking up under the slogan of "socialism with a human face" the camp of socialism and intending to give world imperialism in its arsenal a new model of betrayal in Czechoslovakia, would flourish in to full blossom.

This explains the mad rage, threats and slanders when,



on August 21, 1968, the allied troops of the Warsaw Treaty Countries fulfilled their international duty and helped the entire working class, all working people of Czechoslovakia, under the leadership of sound, Marxist-Leninist forces inside the KSČ, to halt the counter-revolution without bloodshed, and cope with it finally, thereby opening the road towards political and economic consolidation of the country, to work for its socialist future.

Followers of the power of the self-appointed "elite" in the leadership of the Writers' Union, linked with revisionists of the Smrkovský - type, and supported by them by all means, did not give up hope even after August. What did they rely on? On nationalist, petty-bourgeois emotions, which they succeeded in unleashing in the nation under the banner of "democracy", on chaos of ideas and psychic terror, which confused even many upright people, devoted to socialism. However, they particularly relied on close contacts, links with their ideological managers. They relied on support from the bourgeois West. At the meeting of the presidium of the Czech part of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers on October 15, 1968, they decided to "proceed from the existence of intellectual unity, which now exists in the world and which will be even more apparent in future". Already before this, they had set up a commission, which was charged with maintaining contacts and financially supporting emigrant writers (the members of the commission were: Adolf Branač, Lumír Čivrný, Pavel Kohout, Petr Pujman, Hela Volanská, František Vrba). They planned to convene to Prague a conference of the "New European Left"; a conference of Western bourgeois anti-Marxist writers, including even some Soviet writers, in the first place Solzhenitsyn. While severing relations with the Union of Soviet Writers, they wanted to differentiate between official attitudes and individual Soviet writers, whom they presumed to become a part of the "intellectual unity of the

world". Actually it was an attempt to export to the U.S.S.R. the "élite of influence" as preparation of the "élite of power". (Another variant of the effort at bringing about the "thawing of the ice"!)

Together with the other protagonists of the counter-revolutionary rebellion, they continued promoting the activity of Coordination Committee of the artists' unions'. On January 21, 1969, the Coordination Committee formulated its fundamental tasks. The first was to "Study and formulate basic political problems and in keeping with this analysis to determine concrete attitudes. "It also decided, in case of need, to "wage an every-day political struggle" and coordinate activity with the other organizations, especially the students' trade unions. Was it or was it not a political staff of the "rule of the élite"? Concrete political actions organized against the continuing consolidation confirmed this.

In the spirit of resistance to political consolidation in the country they also organized the congress of the Czech part of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers in June 1969. Its actual mission was to set up, in consequence of federalization, Czech writers' bodies and adopt new statutes. The attempt to maintain and secure organizationally and further strengthen the existing influence of the "élite" was expressed in the draft statutes, which characterized the Union "as a community of writers irrespective of world outlook, political conviction or artistic orientation", enabling outright enemies of the socialist order, post-February and new emigrants, to join the writers' organization. (The following more popular members of the Czech part of the Writers' Union have left their country and the people, in whose name they were showing off so pathetically, to emigrate to countries whose bourgeoisie they now serve with their attitudes and deeds: Ludvík Aškenászy, Jan Benes, Vratislav Blažek, Antónín Brousek, Karel Michal-Buksa, Ivan Diviš, Ivo Fleischmann,

Eduard Goldstücker, Josef Jedlička, A. J. Liehm, Igor Hájek, Věra Linhartová, Arnošt Lustig, Radoslav Selucký, Milan Schulz, Josef Škvorecký, Luděk Šnepp, Ludvík Veselý. (Any mention of socialism was rejected by the stage-managed voting machine of the congress. The main organizers and protagonists of the congress were: Jiří Brabec, Jaroslav Seifert, Václav Havel, Milan Jungmann, J. S. Kupka, Vlastimil Maršíček, Jan Procházka, Karel Ptáčník, Milan Uhde, František Vrba. The main tactical intention of the congress organizers was to keep to existing extreme political positions, to maintain their the power in the Union's leadership and to "survive" consolidation.

The "congress" of the Czech part of the Union of Czechoslovak writers therefore was an action attempting to preserve political anti-Party attitudes, by which it in fact abolished itself on the day of its birth. The statutes, according to which it wanted to maintain the centre of the "rule of the élite" could not be and never were approved. There followed an epilogue of several month, in which the presidium of this provisional and practically non-existent Union relied on the support of revisionist forces still keeping in the background. Unwilling to discard the mask of the "conscience of the nation" before the public, it refused to accept socialist principles conditioning membership in the National Front -- the condition of re-assessing the activity of the Union and guarantees for its socialist development and work. (The presidium members were: Jiří Brabec, Jiří Hanzelka, Ladislav Hradský, Milan Jungmann, Ivan Kříž, Karel Ptáčník, Jaroslav Seifert, Jiří Šotola.) The negotiations between National Front bodies and the leadership of the still un-authorized association are proof of the magnanimity of the socialist state, the like of which is hardly found in history.

But how could petty-bourgeois intellectuals, who had reached such a degree of vanity, step back and liquidate

themselves? How could they, in their petty-bourgeois narcissism, understand that from the historical aspect, despite all their energy and "creative political inventiveness" they played a totally grotesque, sub-servient role of emissaries of world reaction, but tragic for the nation? They got into a blind alley -- so narrow and tight that they were unable to back out and sound the retreat. Therefore, they decided to play to the end the role to which they had subscribed. In May 1970, when the new leadership of the Party already was strengthening order in public bodies and waged an ideological struggle for breaking all revisionist, opportunist and anti-Soviet forces in Czechoslovakia, this unauthorized, and therefore non-existing Union of Czech Writers, was sending to all sides protests against curtailment of its activity, which it once again camouflaged with concern "about the interests of literature"! Just as the "Coordination Committee" of the artists' unions with "concern about culture". A really touching concern! To remove any doubt about its nature, let us read the minutes from the meeting of the artists' unions' Coordination Committee, at which Otomar Krejča on May 22, 1969, formulated the further tactics of the revisionist "spiritual élite".

"As long as we have living souls in the auditoria, we shall not be isolated and will be stronger than the power relying on itself and divorced from the élite of the nation which, as the social events of the past year have shown, forms its overwhelming majority.

Art materializes in a round-about way. Our reality is the picture and the metaphore. Let our duel with the power take place by means of our works ... What should be done? We must not let ourselves be deprived of the revival process." (!!) And Jiří Šotola, member of the presidium of the non-existent Union of Czech Writers, added: "...We must act skilfully not to run up against the knife."



These voices are instructive and warning. They are instructive and warning just as the shocking and cynical ridicule with which Ludvík Vaculík, one of the chief "heroes" of that time, "evaluated" in a letter to the election committee of the Union of Czech Writers in 1969 his activity and the activity of his "human-face" comrades-in-arms: "Let's admit that in a way it all was great fun ..."! Could any one else strip more the petty-bourgeois "hero" of that time? Could anyone else -- who unlike Vaculík was aware of the tragedy which our nations were facing, the personal human tragedies which had accompanied the "revival process" since the beginning of 1968, and the inevitable consequence of all that followed -- describe more cynically the activity of these representatives of the "nation's spiritual élite"?

Both statements from the end of the activity of the Coordination Committee of the writers' organization urgently recall the warning appeal made by Zdeněk Najedlý in 1948: "The fight is not over."

Therefore let us approach in a realistic way every concrete phase of the class struggle of the present socialist epoch. The resolution of the 14th Congress of the KSČ is urging us to do this, shows the prospects of our activity, great prospects for art and literature in the new flourishing of socialist Czechoslovakia; prospects and solutions based on the gained positions, on the successes achieved in the all-round consolidation of our society.

#### IV.

We already said in the beginning that we must realise that our literature is conditioned by an objective social process and that any opportunism and liquidatory attitudes in the revolutionary party are a social phenomenon.

Let us recall that during the occupation, the Party was

deprived of thousands and thousands of its best members, communists educated in the period of bolshevization and organization of anti-fascist resistance; people who, had they not perished, would have become experienced, firm, conscious and theoretically educated functionaries and public workers on the ideological and theoretical front after 1948.

In the forcible interruption of that human, or as it is currently called, "cadre" continuity between the steeled party going into illegality, and a party which, weakened in this very sphere was forced to "speed up" the completion of all its cadres after 1945 and 1948 -- mainly for theoretical and ideological work -- in this one can see one of the very serious causes of difficulties in which we found ourselves later in the course of socialist revolution.

Never in the past has Czechoslovak culture, art and science been given so much material aid from the State and the entire society as in the past two decades. However this material aid, provided by the State led by the KSČ and the working class, was used also against the interests of this State. It provided a living for those who with their works and activities were striving for or contributed towards weakening the influence of the KSČ and the working class, who helped petty-bourgeois intellectuals strengthen the "élite of influence". (For example film and television in the sphere of literature, scientific literary institutes, departments of literature, art sciences and esthetics at universities.)

These shortcomings have been analysed in Party documents. It was particularly harmful that instead of upright writers, devoted to the Party and defending the Party's Marxist-Leninist policy, wavering people, of whom it was claimed that we must "win them over" and "give them opportunities" often came to hold responsible posts, although they committed no good-natured mistakes and errors, but had a purposeful line,

of frequently anti-Party activity. This lack of principle, playing into the hands of revisionism, resulted in a gradual weakening of the Party core and in a declining number of communist cultural workers in writers' ranks who were willing to take public and militant stand against negative phenomena and their representatives. For example after the 3rd Congress of the Union of Czechoslovak writers in 1963, in the year when the powerful revisionist wave of the Sixties began to rise, leading bodies in the sphere of culture failed to support the chief editor of Literární Noviny, poet Josef Rybák, a true communist, and sacrificed him to the pressure of the revisionist group.

Since then, Literární Noviny as a weekly was turned gradually into the main press organ of the aggressive revisionist and anti-socialist forces, it organized them and carried out broad ideological subversion. It therefore was suspended in 1967, after the 4th Congress of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers. However, after January 1968, in the atmosphere of open onset of the counter-revolutionary forces, it started to be published again under the title of Literární Listy, then already as an open and most aggressive political, anti-socialist and anti-Soviet platform.

The KSČ leadership at that time also cancelled the Party punishment of Pavel Kohout and returned Party cards to Ivan Klíma, A. J. Liehm, Ludvík Vaculík, actually at a ceremonial meeting in the presence of the ideological secretary of the KSČ Central Committee. This is how the foremost spokesmen and organizers of the rightist movement, who had been expelled from the Party after the 4th Congress of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers, were publicly rehabilitated.

The decline in the activity of writers devoted to socialist was partly due to the fact that lasting and sincere criticism, striving for the rectification of mistakes and shortcomings in the life of our country, was in the sphere

of culture accompanied by suspicion and mistrust which led some writers to passivity; others, who failed to distinguish in time the anti-Party elitarian current, were led to espousing it unwittingly and to supporting it. Moreover, writers devoted to socialism were exposed to a systematic, even existential pressure on the part of publishers and critics. Their works were not published, or were intentionally silenced or condemned as "old-fashioned", "out-dated", they had no chance of being adapted for television or film. These authors found themselves in pincers -- together with the entire progressive culture. It was a period of great tests of character. Some authors then became engulfed by the wave of anti-communist boom, others by the fashion of "modernizing" Marxism, they lost esteem for their better past, they conformed; they denied their past commitment to the Party as sins of youth and began to create in an opposite spirit, they went over to the other side of the barricade. In spring of 1968 the enemies of socialism and bawlers among the writers, such as Vaclav Havel, Josef Hirsal, Jiri Kolár, Petr Kopta, A. C. Nor, Ivan Vyskočil, unleashed a campaign against many communist writers for their Party allegiance and their former actions. They scandalized them, and often demanded that they either renounce their honours or that they be divested of their State distinctions; when they demanded their expulsion from the Union, some of them (e. g. Ed. Valenta, R. Mertlík), even shamelessly threatened and offended these writers in private letters. However, workers responsible for the ideological section did not stand up for them. Thus they remained again without any Party support, and some of them, literally overcome and lacking sufficient internal security and firm conviction -- panicked and succumbed to the August atmosphere.

Today the situation has changed substantially. The leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia relies on the writers, artists, who after all those hard tests



remained true to Marxism-Leninism, to socialism, and will provide all-round support to their effort at developing socialist culture.

One of the causes which added considerably to the anti-socialist policy of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers, was that the composition, the very basis of the Union, had greatly changed. In the place of great personalities, devoted to the Party, who were gradually leaving Czech literature -- Nejedlý, Majerová, Nezval and others -- the organization became more and more strongly influenced by transitory people with petty-bourgeois inclination. Moreover, new authors came to the Union, who entered literature with the help of magazines and publishing houses controlled by revisionists, and whose epigone-type creation and thinking was oriented to absurdity, alienation and fashionable petty-bourgeois "literary commodities". For political, anti-communist purposes, from the need to strengthen the influence of the elitarian bloc, people who had nothing in common with literature, with writing, were recruited as members of the Union; many of them even had no literary work to show for themselves. At variance with valid statutes they, together with the translators, became members of the Union; and created a voting machine, which helped pursue the anti-Party, anti-State activity of the politically organised leadership of the Union.

During two years, up to June 1969, 79 new members were accepted -- more than half of them translators. Sixty people were transferred from candidate ranks. On the whole 139 "new souls" -- selected according to criteria and yardsticks which benefited the power clique in the Union leadership. At the same time, many well-known left-oriented candidates were struck off from the Union.

Despite these facts, the core of writers devoted to socialism, devoted to the nation, the people of this country held out -- although conditions of tremendous psychological

pressure in the hard years of crisis in 1968 and 1969, without guidance from the Party, isolated and practically without the possibility of making an organized stand. The most aggressive rightwingers had fully in their hands not only the Central Committee of the Union, but also the KSČ works committee in the Union.

A culmination of this total ideological and political failure of a part of communist writers, their betrayal of the Party and the working class is that in 1969 they prepared the congress of the Czech section of the Union of Czechoslovak Writers in close cooperation with the anti-communist Circle of Independent Writers. Yet, despite the powerful psychological campaign, only 58 per cent of members took part in the congress; many of them, especially the real writers, left the congress in token of disagreement. Only 262, i. e. less than one-half, of the total number of 590 members, cast their votes. In the elections, nearly 100 per cent members did not cast their ballot either for Václav Černý or for Václav Havel and Pavel Kohout. This shows that an opposition was present at the congress, although it was not united or organized by anyone.

This was proof that there remained among the writers forces capable of solving gradually the abnormal, shameful situation in the Czech Writers was formed towards the end of 1970, from among the ranks of outstanding Czech writers true to the Party and socialism, who elaborated new statutes approved on December 21, 1970. This closed a disgraceful chapter in the history of our literature, marked by the fact that the leadership of our writers' organization, contrary to all tradition of Czech progressive literature, was seized by a clique of political adventurers, often non-writers, who turned this social institution into an instrument of reaction, into one of the most aggressive centres of anti-Party, anti-Soviet policy. The shameful period, which inflicted im-

measurable damage on Czech literature, prose, poetry, drama, literary science and criticism, and esthetics, and dragged our literature, especially the young creative generation, on the road running counter to the aim, the spirit and the mission of humanist socialist literature, enriching and inspiring the life of the people.

V.

Comrades,

It is not our fault that in its first steps and also in the analysis which has been delivered, the leadership of the new Union of Czech Writers had to deal basically with the policy of the former leadership of the Union, its negative, even catastrophic consequences, and not immediately with questions of art. Political practice requires a political reply. Now, let us take up questions of literature, let us outline our programme, the perspective orientation of our creative effort. Naturally this is taking us again to the sphere of politics, to the platform of world struggle of ideas in the sphere of art and literary criticism, which is proper to us, for which a writer becomes a writer. As Marxists, we proceed from the fact that the outline of our programme cannot be divorced from the present state of our society and its prospects, from the objective process of social development, from the specific phase of our internal and the world-wide class struggle. A realistic view of our prospects must be linked with the objective state of affairs and the existing process of social development, just as our retrospective view of the writers' affairs in past years could not be divorced from social development. Let us therefore take a realistic approach to the present socialist epoch, to the present state of domestic class forces as well as the class forces struggling in the world. Let us get rid of barren illusions, and as socialist writers let us have confidence



in our hard, responsible and unusually important work, in the future, confidence relying on the historical mission of the working class, the natural continuity with the revolutionary, humanistic, popular and socialist bequest of our national literature. Confidence drawing on the ideological and creative continuity of the great Soviet realistic literature and the great realist, humanistic and socialist art of the world.

Our Union came into existence as an organization of writers, who are devoted to the idea of socialism and who are resolved to make their contribution with their works towards enriching socialist literature. It is a selective union. Its core is formed by communist writers, linked together by a common Marxist-Leninist world outlook. It includes those non-party writers, who have an actively creative attitude to our socialist order and its class power. Our Union came into being in consequence of sharp differentiation, which took place among writers in the recent crisis years of our society. Its basic mission is the support for socialist art, socialist literature in its struggle with bourgeois and petty-bourgeois literature. Therefore, this mission must not be weakened either by tolerance of views or by connivance in assessing literary works. This would actually take us back to the all-embracing old Union, which would, by illusory unity, once again conceal the class nature of two cultures, two literatures, which would once again hamper, or even prevent a purposeful support of conscious socialist art, or would facilitate new political adventures.

The membership base of our writers' organization is created so that the Union committee offers membership to writers whose political attitude and the basic quality of their works are in keeping with the mission of the new Union. In this way 115 writers have been taken on so far, which gave rise to quite a broad Union basis, especially when considering the fact that neither translators nor publicists are members



of the Union Czech Writers.

Our members include important and well-known writers: national artist Vilém Závada, meritorious artists Josef Seke-  
ra, Bohumil Říha, Svatopluk Turek, Čestmír Jeřábek, J. V. Ple-  
va, Josef and Miroslav Toman, Ladislav Stehlík, Václav Kap-  
lický, Miloš V. Kratochvíl, Norbert Fryd, Jiří Marek, Jaro-  
mír Tomáček, Jan Pilař, talented and popular authors like  
Pavel Bojar, Vojtěch Čech, Václav Čtvrtek, Miloslav Florian,  
Josef Hanzlík, Rudolf Kalsík, František Kožík, Jiří Křenek,  
Vladimír Pazourek, Alexej Pludek, Zdeněk Pluhař, Josef Ryták,  
Ivan Skála, Donát Šajner, Jiří Taufer, Alena Vrbova and  
dozens of others. We think that already now it is a firm  
basis, which will be gradually widened and which will help  
co-create good conditions for the creation of new artistic  
and critical works, for the strengthening of the ideological  
creative influence on the wide circle of writers and the  
entire artistic sphere. This is the main mission of the new  
Union, a mission which forms part of the general effort of  
the Party for the further development of our socialist coun-  
try, for an all-round development of our nations.

How then do we want to work, what criteria do we want  
to adopt in our efforts for a gradual, an ever wider forming  
of the socialist creative front, so that our literary harvest  
might be as rich as possible.

In the November programme statement in 1971 we pro-  
claimed our support for the popular, democratic and socialist  
values which our literature has created, to the progressive  
traditions of Czech national culture, to all works of artist-  
ically militant and spiritually rich avant-gardes, i. e.  
works -- do not let us be afraid of saying so again and  
again -- which serve the people; works which with their  
artistic rendering, in concrete full and living beauty, reveal  
men in his struggle for social and at the same time personal  
human happiness. We want to have works which reveal, uncover

clear perspectives of life, develop man's emotional riches, strengthen his moral properties, appreciate the power of the human spirit and raise high the entire culture of the nation. The shaping of socialist man is unthinkable without a comprehensive effect of art. We lay stress on the word comprehensive, which involves rational influencing, the influence of art on the rational components of man, on the shaping of his world outlook, on the understanding of the continuity of thought of all world humanist and socialist art. We emphasize this aspect because various treatises often overestimate and one-sidedly point out the effect of art only on the emotional side of the human being, on the side which, though very important, is only one of key components, which must combine for a work of art to have a really strong effect.

While art as a whole is indispensable for the shaping of socialist man, literature as its part holds an exceptionally responsible position, especially from the ideological point of view. The film, radio, television, the theatre depend on literature, and their ideological and artistic level is more or less connected with the situation and the standard of literature itself. Therefore, close and purposeful co-operation of these kinds and branches of art seems to us to be urgently needed.

What heritage, what sources do we want to take as our inspiration so that -- in the spirit of the line of the 14th Congress of the KSC -- we might support and develop ideologically-based socialist literature in its wide artistic variety, with its wealth of genres, inventiveness and imagination of socialist realism, which is our basic creative method respecting the variety and wealth of styles and artistic approaches and individuality of makers?

What does it mean for today's socialist artist, for today's socialist writer to have a realistic approach to social reality? What are his works of art to be like if they

are to contribute consciously towards creating the reality of the morrow, to co-determine the course of the entire social process, whose substance and reality rests in the revolutionary transition of the society from capitalism to socialism? It means that the artist, the writer stands consciously on the positions of the working class, its policy striving for an all-round development of our socialist society, for strengthening the world forces of socialism in its struggle with capitalism. It means that in keeping with the nature of his talent he will link his work with this reality, that his works of art will be comprehensible to those to whom he turns himself and who are the makers of the new world, the decisive subject of all social transformations -- the working people.

We accept as our own this Marxist-Leninist concept of artistic creation. We are not plunging back into "old stale water", but are entering again the broad, but firmly outlined river bed with a vivid, eternally flowing current. There is no return in art. Socialist realism is for us a way in which literature responds to the steadily developing socialist life and how it itself enriches it. At the same time, socialist realism is changing itself with the development of life, it enriches itself and advances. If understood in this way, our new, socialist literature will always bear in its content and form the imprint of modernity.

This concept therefore orientates the writer to the social man in all his entirety, proceeds from the dialectic concept of reality, from the Marxist world outlook as a unifying principle. It emphasizes the active role of literature in the social process in its specificity and in the wealth of creative means. It understands socialist realism as a synthesis of the existing development of progressive literature, especially as a dialectic-materialist overcoming of critical realism and romanticism.



By accepting this concept, this living understanding of socialist realism as a creative method, we say that as writers we fully endorse in our efforts the right and the duty to become an active part of the nation and the entire international progressive socialist front, headed by the U.S.S.R. From socialist, class aspects we want to help create by artistic means, to co-determine the course of the entire social process, to co-create the reality of the morrow. By this we also say that the socialist writer will not just passively nod his consent in his work and describe the surface of reality. His duty of writer is far greater. It is necessary for him to seek and struggle for the truth of life by artistic means, to reveal and portray the innermost image of the man of today. By this we also say that we do not want to and we must not conceal the contradictions arising in the class-divided world, that we must not conceal the basic conflicts which are taking place in our time, that we do not want to conceal and neglect the complexity of the development and the life of today's man.

Socialism is not free of enemies, internal and external -- as the recent past has shown only too clearly. But this is not all. People starting the socialist way of life still bear in themselves certain doubts, misgiving, selfishness, love of comfort, ignorance, sometimes self-satisfaction, inclination to bureaucratism, career-seeking and a consumer concept of socialism, which results in chasing for unjustified earnings, fluctuation, feigned sickness, abuse of the advantages of socialism. There are cases of parasitism, stealing State property and similar vices. All this is slowing down our progress, it depreciates and hampers it. Not even a socialist citizen is an angel. In his life, too, moral, emotional and character problems and cross-roads have remained. Even today people differ in a thousand nuances. Each man is a battlefield between the old and the new. All of us are dependent on living conditions, we are influenced by the



environment, we are subject to influences, good and bad, socialist and non-socialist. Various petty-bourgeois and bourgeois ideas are living and spreading among us, often bearing a socialist cover, when the negative sign is not clear enough, because it concerns very sensitive internal attitudes to life, work, friends.

Therefore the work of a communist or a progressive writer in general must not be devoid of a really big piece of critical courage, right and duty to help reveal contradictions and negative phenomena of our life. At the same time, however, it must stand on the side of the new against the old and basically advocate all that helps develop socialist society, thereby helping man and his all-round human advancement, fulness; man who is the main subject of socialist literature.

This feature of socialist commitment strongly differentiates our notion of realism from mere critical realism, under which the artist saw that the society in which he was living is not in order, but did not always have a sufficiently penetrating sight and estimation to see in class struggle the correct road towards the future. The position of a writer living and creating under a system in which the political power has been taken over by the working class is basically different, more responsible. The socialist artist, the socialist writer must understand the hardships of the struggle waged by the working class while fighting for the revolutionary transformation of the society, for the victory of socialism and communism. With utmost understanding of the struggle, the hardships, with which the working class, the Party and society are coping, he must espouse the concrete policy of the Party, take it for his own, and with his works, his civic involvement, give it all-round assistance. In this lies the essence of the artist's commitment.

High ideological socialist maturity is for the writer

the first condition of verity and consequently of convincingness of the work. Therefore, socialist ideas should be closely familiar to the writer and identical with the aim of his work. Only then can the writer distinguish and refuse various "fashionable literary trends", under the cover of which bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology, philosophy and policy are foisted upon him. Only in this way is it possible, in complicated situations of the class struggle, in the controversial development of man, who builds socialism in difficult conditions, to uncover and defend in artistic form the prospects of the development of socialist society and socialist life.

The task of the Party under socialism is to control, in a planned, straightforward and clear-sighted way, the historical process of developing national culture. However, the actual development of art, the creation itself, depends on the artists themselves. On the way in which they understood the development of the society, the historical mission of the KSC and its Party line, in which they educate themselves purposefully. All depends on their individual growth and personal responsibility, which no one else can do for them. We all know very well that talent in itself is not enough, that the work of a real artist is a permanent and hard seeking, which reflects the artist's own development, his individual fate, sometimes accompanied by mistakes and failures. A real espousal of the Marxist world outlook is not a mere addition to the artist's creative work, but is a part of his creative capacity, the artistic character and insight of the world.

Our Union as an ideologically creative organization will therefore seek and apply many informal effective means for a permanent, systematic ideological education of writers, especially for a deeper understanding of the principles of socialist patriotism and internationalism, for a more profound understanding of the class character of art and the negative

role of petty-bourgeois influences in our society. These means include seminars, talks, get-togethers with representatives of Party and public life, with foremost foreign socialist writers and critics, participation in ideologically creative conferences in other socialist countries and at various international meetings of artists, study visits to socialist countries. They will include also individual assistance by arranging consultations of specialists in the creative work of the author, help in the study of the environment, etc.

Of great importance will be the publication of the Literary Monthly, the first issue of which will appear in September. The periodical will become an important platform of new, socialist literary creation and Marxist-Leninist critique and esthetics. The Literary Monthly, whose editor in-chief is comrade Rudolf Kalčík, will be the first creative recommendation of the Union to the public at home and abroad. At the same time it will be an important forum on which young authors and their works will be meeting experienced and outstanding writers.

The basic ideological mission of the Union will be to give an all-round assistance to writers in their endeavour for highly artistic, socialist work, especially dealing with the present time. The present must be in the focus of our artistic endeavour, our work. Our art, our literature should even attack the present.

We have said already before that the main subject of socialist literature is man and the full development of his properties and capacities. It is a great subject. However, the subject alone will not make a work of art. One principle applies to art: the subject, the idea, the content and the form are an inseparable entity, and any neglect may reduce the value of the work. Unprofessional rendering, lack of skill as regards the form and dullness may depreciate even the best intention.



An inseparable part of our notion of socialist realism therefore is the emphasis laid on the unity of content and form, unity of progressive ideas and their adequate artistic rendering. This is why in the Thirties the representatives of the Marxist-Leninist literary science, critique and esthetics rejected in literature -- and naturally also in critique -- both formalism and primitivism, as well as artistic imperfection. Bedřich Václavěk pointed to the petty-bourgeois substance of those works in which the depth of artistic insight and rendering was replaced by superficiality, real revolutionary qualities by mere revolutionary slogans:

"Just because the so-called proletarian writers were so little permeated with the ideology of dialectic materialism and had so little practical experience with the masses' daily struggle, that their works remained petty-bourgeois with all their structure was it necessary to lay emphasis on tentativeness, to put in verse political theses or to save a non-revolutionary content by a revolutionary, ideological point, instead of using a deeply-lived grouping of facts, the entire concept and rendering, each particular line to convince the reader; instead of making revolutionary art, they attached a revolutionary-political point to non-revolutionary art". (B. Václavěk: *Tvorba a společnost* (Art and Society), Československý spisovatel, Praha 1961, p.159).

We realize this principle at the very outset of the activity of our Union, whose proper mission is to create conditions for the emergence of artistically strong and convincing socialist works.

All readers know the moment when a work of art awakens in him feelings which until then he has been unable to qualify, especially his positive, often latent capacities, joy and excitement from ascertaining them, from the possibility of their own expression and assertion. However, we should realize -- together with those who are in charge of administering



and controlling cultural life and its entire process -- that with only a few historical exceptions, art usually does not directly engender practical activity. The process of influencing through art is not direct like the Nevski Prospekt, as Chernyshevski used to say. Often it remains concealed for some time even to people in whom it is already taking place. Art influences the entire psyche of man, strengthens his will and kindles in him new vital strength. This is the kind of literature we want to strive for. This means that we are faced with tremendously difficult and exacting work. In clarifying its importance for us, writers, and after the previous years this is specially desirable; I should like to quote F. X. Šalda:

"It is necessary to efface first from the fantasy and the mind of today's mankind the false theory of individual geniality, of personal super-humanity, which claims special honours, rewards and gains as an alleged privilege by the grace of God or Nature; (it is necessary) for the writer to discard the unworthy and threadbare mask of appointment, of all metaphysical juggling, and become what he really was, albeit secretly: the worker, the smith of his language, expression, judgement, conviction, opinion, credo." (F. X. Šalda: *Kritické projevy* 12, 1922-1924, pp. 47-48.)

Socialist art, continuing from our progressive traditions and portraying the life and the struggle of men in our national collective, naturally does not and cannot grow in national separation. This experience is particularly alive in our literature. We are reminded of it constantly also by the fact that we are living in a state which is the home of two national cultures, their active confrontation, is an unusually important phenomenon, capable of multiplying the power of each other, mutually enriching and stimulating the character and the development of national cultures, especially

because the ideologically artistic aims are identical and the national roots of the two cultures -- despite their national individuality -- are close and mutually inspiring.

We hold in great esteem the successes of Slovak socialist literature, and we shall cooperate closely and in an all-round way with the new leadership of the Union of Slovak Writers. We shall develop the international role of socialist literature, the international understanding of the entire world class struggle, which removes national barriers. Both our Unions are agreed on all the basic issues of the analysis and prospects, and on the basis of mutual understanding they jointly condemn, under the leadership of the KSČ, all attempts at nationalism and separatism, all isolationism. In solving all the tasks awaiting both our unions, we shall rely on each other; we shall solve most of the tasks and problems jointly. After the congresses, this cooperation will climax in joint federal leadership, which will coordinate the activity of both unions, will ensure joint action, multiply the power of unified, common Czechoslovak socialist literature, it will be its State-wide representative at home and abroad.

From our innermost national interests, from the very substance of socialist literature, we emphasized in our pre-congress statement that we would stand in one front of the anti-imperialist struggle with writers of countries of the socialist camp, headed by Soviet writers and progressive makers of the whole world literature.

We all know what a reviving and inspiring force for our art and for the shaping of political and moral qualities of our man was Soviet art -- its bestworks of literature, philosophy and drama, both in the Thirties and after the Second World War. It played a tremendous mobilizing role in rallying patriotic forces of our nations around the KSČ in the struggle for socialism, especially in its key periods, for example in the process of setting up cooperatives in the villages.

Mutual influencing, common inspiration of the entire socialist world literature are indispensable; its various springs and currents empty into one river of "living water".

One of the concerns of the new Union was to renew and strengthen contacts with the writers' organisations in the socialist countries, which the former leadership had disrupted. We have signed protocols on cooperation, mutual consultations, mutual propagation of literary works, and on the exchange of study and creative sojourns with the Union of Soviet Writers, with the unions of Bulgarian, Polish, and Hungarian writers, with the Writers' Union of the German Democratic Republic, and, in April this year, with the Union of Rumanian Writers. In this - and we are stressing it again - we are interested not only in social contacts, but also, and primarily in contacts on a creative level; not only in contacts on the Union leadership level, but in close, creative, personal contacts of authors. This year several dozens of our member will visit these countries for study and creative sojourns. An equal number of our friends from the socialist countries will be guests of our Union. Of great importance was the active participation of our delegation in the meeting of representatives of writers unions from the socialist countries, held in Moscow last year, and in the recent deliberations in Ulan Bator.

While our analysis criticises the effects of bourgeois western literature, which literally flooded our readers with its ideas in recent years, it does not suggest that we intend to erect a Chinese Wall to be separated from all western literature. We are not so ignorant as not to know that the part of western literature which was advertised in this country in the past is not the only literature of the West. We are not so shortsighted as not to proudly acknowledge all progressive, democratic, humanistic and socialist literature which fights for social progress, national and social libe-



ration, against the exploitation and oppression of man. Therefore, this kind of literature will continue to appear in the editorial plans of our publishing houses. Our Union will establish contacts with progressive writers in the West. We have already invited several of these writers for study sojourns in this country. In the same way, we intend to develop intensive contacts with progressive representatives of writers from the so-called Third World. Our Union will take an active part in cocreating conditions for all international events and writers' meetings supporting the great peace policy of the Soviet Union.

All international contacts of the Czech Writers' Union will serve mutual cooperation, mutual knowledge and the creative influencing of socialist literatures - their frequent mutual translation. In this connection, mention should be made of literary workers who hold a special place in international connections: translators. We do not under-estimate the work of translators, they are the mediators between art values of various nations. However, we are not indifferent to what they translate and how they translate it, all the more so as a good fifty per cent of fiction published today are translations. We therefore think that, following ideological differentiation, translators should have their own aktiv serving its purpose, with which the Czech Writers' Union would closely cooperate.

We are convinced that the application of the basic principles of socialist realism and its creative method will again help to make our literature a great and, in its way, irreplaceable assistant in the present social struggle for a full socialist life, for a new, socialist world. However, let us be realists - we repeat again, let us take a realistic approach to the state in which our literature is finding itself, what tasks we are facing, what heritage from the past years we must overcome.



The resolution of the 14th Congress of the KSC shows that "the long-term growth of non-socialist, petty-bourgeois tendencies, especially in the ideologically-creative sphere, led to a gradual deviation of a great part of art and culture from its socialist mission, and culminated in a misuse of this sphere by self-appointed elite groups for the political aims of the rightwingers". We must, however, count with the fact that convalescence of the weakened body will be no short-term process, especially when realising that that which took place in our literature in the past years was a reflection of objectively acting social forces. Naturally, the struggle between socialism and capitalism continues, under particularly complicated conditions in the given class situation. The recuperation of our literature, continuously infected by anti-national, anti-popular and anti-socialist bacilli, will not be easy. Attempts at paralysing literature and all culture, the great weapon of socialism, will continue. This can be seen from the statements of many "elite" representatives of the former leaderships of art unions, in the concluding meeting of the so-called "Coordination Committee". True, the committee has ceased to work, but its plan was to disintegrate and weaken the political power of the working class led by the Communist Party.

There are enough indications and attempts at realising this practice in literature and in the whole cultural sphere. There are enough attempts at fighting against socialism through various allegories and transparent historical pictures. And on the part of critics there are attempts to over-rate such works, point to their "artistic value" and try to smuggle them again into the body of our literature, as the ideological weapon of the enemy. The struggle against the anti-socialist forces, which in this country was waged on an ideological, philosophical and political level, was decided in the political field. But in the sphere of ideology and philosophy, the reactionary forces have not yet been fully

defeated and destroyed. Enemy ideology will continue to try to penetrate art from these revisionist roots. This is why the 14th Congress of the KSČ stressed emphatically that "we must not lose from sight that there cannot be peace with bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideologies and influences...", that we shall consistently work against their introduction into the sphere of culture and art. We are proceeding in this way under the leadership of the Party.

The principles of socialist realism, whose method we take as our own, even conditions the requirement for an irreconcilable struggle against these ideologies.

Comrades!

An unprecedented wave of commercialisation of art and of mass distribution of literary trash has surged in recent years. This wave was an accompanying feature of snobbish elitarianism, and a common product of petty-bourgeois psychology. Publishing houses controlled by representatives and allies of the "spiritual élite" were putting out hundreds of thousands copies of trash, sub-average detective and murder stories, pornographies and other "works" which inundated the book market and basically narrowed the scope for real literature, spoiled the taste of readers and helped to demoralise broad readers' strata. Let us name some examples of this commercialism which knew no bounds. The Catholic publishing house "Vyšehrad", without any fear of God and eternal damnation, published various detective stories by Fleming, next to the Great Story of the Bible. The Odeon Publishing House published "The Secrets of Paris" by Sue, and the Svoboda Publishing House added to this "The Secrets of the Executioners" - the memoirs of seven generations of the Sanson family who used to hold the post of executioners in Paris. Murder and death in general remain such interesting phenomena on our

book market that it is necessary to quote them in all forms, colours and likenesses. Let us mention the names of detective novels published by one of the so-called writers over the past ten years: The Nearness of Death, Baroque Death, Bitter Death, Death in the Wind, Death of a Dandy, Murers, Magics and Intrigues. The Horizont Publishing House, founded in 1968 as part of the Socialist Academy with the task of publishing literature in aid of lecturers, published instead a review of the World History of Sexuality in several volumes; the Praxis Publishing house published M. Davenport's book "The Valley of Decision" in an edition of 100,000 copies. The Olympia Publishing House supplied the market with many titles from the works of K. May - naturally in appropriately large editions - up to the Petroleum Price, that means that part of sub-average literature, which the author himself criticised in his memoirs.

When speaking about magazine, serialized literature, it is of interest to note that also the Orbis Publishing House catered at that time translations of West-German 50-pfennig literature, publishing it in the form of books, although the covers of the "originals" stated clearly that the booklets must not be sold in bookshops or circulated by libraries, quoting legal paragraphs of FRG laws on trash literature. That means that in the FRG they were banned - but in this country they were not. In brief, jungle laws prevailed in the publication of literature. Recently, Party bodies and the Ministry of Culture have adopted a number of measures aimed at cleansing and opening scope for socialist literature in publishing activity and editorial practice. Our Union will actively help in putting into effect these measures and will assist in solving the new tasks in this sphere.

Therefore a difficult, but socially necessary struggle with the consequences of several years of petty-bourgeois rule of the "spiritual elite" over our culture is awaiting



us. The new union, just as Marxist criticism, art science and esthetics, is facing the important task of evaluating book production in recent years from the point of view of social benefit.

Today, socialist literary production must regain the foremost position it justly deserves. For a long time criteria prevailed which condemned this literature. At the same time, the large quantity of literary trash markedly spoiled the taste of the readers. We cannot lose from sight the fact that many readers, especially from the middle strata, look upon literature and life, upon the world around them through glasses which were carefully adapted over many years by the group of "elite" writers, critics and literary scientists.

What is to be done to make socialist literature again our ideological weapon? In the first place, we must realize that even here, we have something to build on, that the connections with the great works of our socialist classics have not been entirely disrupted. In the sixties, the publication of certain outstanding works which maintained in the context of our literature and in the minds of the readers the values of socialist literature was successfully ensured. Many contemporary authors remained faithful to this trend, despite the atmosphere hostile to socialist literature, and are its vanguard today.

However, a basic condition for its successful advancement is the concept of developing socialist literature, the long-term and well-considered concept of developing the entire cultural policy. Let all our culture and art be illuminated by one beacon: the revolutionary Marxist-Leninist idea of communism.

According to the decisions of Party and State bodies, we should create fundamental pillars in literature, without which new original socialist literature and its necessary mass dissemination could not get under way. These are ide-



ological and material pillars, as they were defined by the 14th Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. Our Union has already taken certain steps in this direction.

We know that socialist literature is a literature for the people, for the working people, but as we could see, the working man, especially the worker and cooperative farmer, his life, his world of thought and feeling, his work and social appreciation, have practically disappeared from literature. Therefore, the leadership of our Union has initiated cooperation with our largest and most important mass organisation, the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement, and with the Ministry of Agriculture. The outcome will be an agreement on annual competitions for various forms of prose, poetry and drama featuring the working man, particularly from the environment of workers and the present-day village. Yes, we have in mind a social order - just as in the past, the evaluation of various competitions and the awarding of literary, film, art and other prizes at home and abroad in fact constituted an order for anti-socialist work. Our social order should become one of the most serious and most effective stimuli for new works which should be orientated towards great ideological themes of socialism, towards the great tradition of revolutionary struggles of our working class and towards internationalism; it should portray man and his full, rich, spiritual and rational life in the struggle for social progress, for a truly human life.

The Union, as an ideologically creative organisation of writers, will exert its influence on the editorial plans of all publishing houses publishing original works. Therefore it will send its members to the literary boards of these publishing houses, so as to evaluate and influence the entire publication activity. It will take up close contacts with the press, radio, television and film. This cooperation should take on the form of bilateral contacts. The first successful steps in this direction have already been taken in cooperation with the radio.

The Union will also have the task of improving conditions for the creation of new, artistically strong and powerful socialist works. Our union has given an impulse for necessary royalty adjustments and, together with the Czech Literary Fund, will award annual prizes and premiums for the best works of prose, poetry and literary criticism. Many outstanding works of members of our union have been awarded various prizes. The title of Laureate of the Klement Gottwald State Prize has been conferred on National Artist Vilém Závada for his collection of poems called "Na prahu" (On the Threshold), Jan Kozák for his novel "Svatý Michal" (Saint Michael), on Academician Ladislav Štoll for his literary-theoretical study called "O tvar a strukturu v slovesném umění" (On the Shape and Structure in Literary Art). Annual prizes of the Czech Writers' Union have been awarded to Josef Kainar, in memoriam, for his work "Rozhlásky" and his poems, to Zdeněk Pluhař for his novel "Konečná stanice" (The Terminal) and to Bohumil Říha for his novel "Přede mnou poklekní" (Kneel before me). Prizes in the competition in honour of the 50th anniversary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia were awarded to Miroslava Tomanová for her work "Stříbrná pláň" (The Silver Plain), to Jiří Křenek for his book "Pláňata" (The Crab-Trees), to Josef Jelen for his collection of poems; J. V. Pleva received the Prize of Marie Majerová, Josef Strnadel the Prize of the Albatros Publishing House for his book "Zamrzlá studánka" (The Frozen Spring), Donát Šajner was awarded the Prize of Czechoslovak Radio for his drama "Chalupa č. 17" (Cottage No. 17), and František Kozík and Vladimír Přibský for another radio drama, which also won the Prize of Czechoslovak Television. Many authors and works were awarded various other prizes.

We think that the State bodies should ensure effective publicity of socialist literature on the book market at home. Belletristic publishing houses should agree on the publication of a joint weekly which would popularise literature and inform readers, librarians and the whole network of bookshops.

The principle should be applied that the best works of socialist literature of the year be included in mass editions of the most popular book clubs.

The Union - together with State bodies - should also take an active part in popularising socialist literature abroad, in publishing multi-language bulletins, in the work of periodicals published abroad and so on. The leadership of the Union has taken the first steps also in this direction. It organised a conference of Bohemists from the socialist countries and arranged meetings in our cultural centres abroad. In negotiations with representatives of writers' unions from the socialist countries, it drew attention to the one-sided, distorted practice in translating Czech literature in the past, and agreed a joint procedure of mutual popularisation of classical, and especially contemporary socialist literature. The Union will elaborate also this concept after the Congress, particularly from the point of view of publicising our socialist literature in western countries.

The Czech Writers' Union wants to and it will implement and promote its ideological and artistic activity in all these spheres of cultural activity. It wants to and it will promote it within the programme of the State cultural policy and the Ministry of Culture, by independent and specific means and forms ensuing from the specificity and uniqueness of art.

However, in order to ensure the success of our difficult and complicated struggle, it is necessary to put into life and to implement the principle laid down by the 14th Congress Communist Party of Czechoslovakia: "The Material means for culture and art must be expended so as to support committed works; they must not support petty-bourgeois bad taste, the commercialisation of culture, trash and anti-socialist tendencies."

If we did not start drawing up a plan of well-considered, purposeful support and development of our modern works and



its consistent implementation, committed literature would continue to be on the fringe of book production as a consequence of the previous development. At best, it would be suffered as a poor relation, while the main current of commercialised and competitive literature would be rushing on victoriously. We are aware of the fact that in the present, rather absurd practice, it is not enough to merely influence editorial plans. The reader must know about books, he must see them in the shop windows and on the sales counter. However, our sales network, the book shops of the Kniha enterprise, are basically ill-supplied self-service shops, supplied according to the taste and intentions of head salesman not always highly qualified, who are frequently influenced by commercial considerations. It mostly depends on them which books will be printed and how large the editions will be, which books will get into the hands of the reader. No wonder that under the present situation our book market still brings mass editions of sub-average and average detective novels and adventure books produced by local businessmen, or translations of dubious works, while committed socialist literature is published in much smaller editions.

We could not count with a full and much desired development of committed literature without purposeful and permanent support. We must do everything, to get it from the periphery of interest of both our writers and readers. Responsible State bodies are now starting to put this policy into practice. They have prepared and are preparing measures aimed at suppressing commercial interest in the present system - through a new kind of publication practice and a new system of royalties and social appreciation. The Union is showing initiative also in this direction, and will promote it still further.

We all know what role in this struggle was played by that part of literary science and criticism which, in the Sixties, served the political and artistic aims of the group



of petty-bourgeois "elite" writers. The first part of the report has warned us of it, and confronted it with the basic tasks of Marxist literary criticism and esthetics as they were laid down and elaborated by the representatives of our literary criticism and esthetics in the twenties and thirties. It pointed to the necessity of scientific criticism, and to the fact that literature cannot be evaluated separately from the society and its problems, from history, politics, the class struggle, but in close connection with them. It also pointed out that Marxist criticism has created its own set of positive values and criteria ensuing from the very essence of the tasks and mission of socialist art - the art which serves the social revolution and socialism, liberation and the full development of man in society. Thus, the fundamental criterion of Marxist criticism is the notion that literature and art are of class character, and that is why Marxist criticism is evaluating it within the socio-historical context and from the point of view of consistent socialist principles.

The Resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU on art and literary criticism, of January 28, 1972, is a new extraordinarily stimulating impulse and challenge, a direct appeal to our literary critics. It stresses that the CPSU considers it absolutely necessary to introduce consistently ideological viewpoints into literary criticism, because it depends on the ideological criteria of literary criticism what ideology, what programme of the socialist society will be presented to the society in various forms of art. It also stressed the necessity of consistently defending and asserting criteria capable of expressing the fundamentals required by socialist society.

All these principles apply fully to our literary critics and scientists, they are a life-giving source of their theoretical views. Our literary science and criticism must apply these principles in an exacting and creative way, and must put them into life.

Our literary critics and scientists are facing enormous tasks in this respect: to acquire Marxist criteria of values, to test themselves in their light, and revalue literary works, especially those originating from the sixties. Those literary works which, with substantial help from critics of that time, was penetrated with apparently non-ideological trends, trends of alienation, absurdity, helplessness, elitarianism, and which by simulating artistic expression presented to the reader methodological instructions of wiping out completely problems of "realism" as well as of Marxism and socialism by accepting everything as being Marxist and socialist; everything but the fundamental class principles of Marxism, which, on the contrary, are declared to be survivals of dogmatism, conservatism and sectarianism.

Our literary critics and scientists are facing important tasks in connection with overcoming the heritage of structuralism and the struggle against wide-spread petty-bourgeois thinking and its ideology, because by combating it we are cleansing the criteria of original Czech socialist literature. They should note the absurd fact that in textbooks of Czech language and literature the young school generation of socialist Czechoslovakia is getting distorted information about authors like Václav Havel, Ivan Vyskočil, Jiří Kolář, Jan Zahradník and, naturally, the entire May Group as being the representatives of our literature. They learn very little, and in some cases practically nothing, about writers like Josef Toman, Josef Sekera, Karel Nový, Boh. Říha, Ivan Skála, František Branislav, Jiří Taufer, and others. (Secondary School Reader - State Pedagogical Publishing House) In his book "50 Czech Writers of the past 50 Years", which has practically become a textbook of Czech literature, Vítězslav Macháček practically popularises the same authors, among them the emigrant Jan Čep, collaborator of Tigris's "Svědectví", and others. On the other hand, many of the best writers, among them also Julius Fucík, are not included in this "selection".

Today, the Ministry of Education is checking up all textbooks of social-science and cultural character, and is preparing the publication of new ones. However, it is necessary for Marxist critics to help by thorough analysis expose this artificial halo over the heads of this quasi "elite", purposefully and consistently fed for many years, and to justly evaluate real socialist works.

However, continuous and timely evaluation of new literary works should become the "daily bread" of our Marxist critics and esthetics. The critics should weigh, study and support by critical suggestions socially significant modern literature, which is specially needed - due to the recent intentional, truly Babylonian confusion of values and criteria, and the wave of Epigonian "elitarian" literature accompanied by trash for large-scale readers' consumption. It will be necessary for them to join the rhythm of time and its social tasks, while standing on a Marxist platform; it will be necessary that the present society be in the centre of their attention - just as in that of the writers.

However, let us take a realistic approach also towards the state and possibilities of our Marxist literary science, criticism and esthetics; let us help create prerequisites for their development - to a certain extent it can even be said for their formation. We think that the leadership of the Czech Writers' Union should rally the Marxist literary critics around a literary monthly, provide on its pages sufficient space for critical and theoretical essays and discussions, organise in cooperation with scientific institutions various conferences and meetings with important socialist and progressive critics from abroad. The leadership of the Union will award annual prizes for the best critical work, and will recommend the Czech Literary Fund to award premiums for stimulative critical studies. The leadership of the Union realises the necessity of expanding international contacts with Marxist critics and literary scientists. Therefore,



when signing the agreement with the Union of Soviet Writers, it was decided to hold bilateral conferences of Czechoslovak and Soviet critics. The leadership will delegate several critics and theoreticians to the first conference which is to be held in Moscow, probably in November this year. The leadership of the Union, being fully aware of the shortage of young critics and theoreticians, has recommended the opening of special post-gradual courses for critics and editors, supplemented by lectures and meetings with our and foreign Marxist literary critics and scientists. At the joint meeting of representatives of writers' organisations from the socialist countries, held in Ulan Bator towards the end of May this year, our delegation gave an impulse to arranging a joint international seminar of young Marxist-leninist critics and theoreticians.

Comrades!

The task of our Congress is to assess the causes and circumstances, which resulted in the group of reformist, anti-socialist and petty-bourgeois representatives of the so-called "spiritual elite" taking hold of the leadership of the writers' organisation. The activity of this group caused great damage to our literature and compromised the whole writers' community. The task of our Congress is to draw consequences from this lesson, to openly disassociate itself from the activity of the former leadership of the Union, and simultaneously to assess the first steps made by the new leadership of the Czech Writers' Union. The Congress closes the first stage of the life of the new Union, and indicates the road along which we should go in future. It required enormous work and selflessness, moral strength and courage on the part of those who from the ruins of the cultural policy, which remained after the crisis years in our society, started organising a new ideologically creative, socialist writers' union. We



should like to thank all those who did not hesitate to devote their energy and time for the Czech Writers' Union to live again in the socialist spirit and to help our literature. The report delivered here shows how many tasks we are facing, what struggle socialist literature will have to wage so as to fulfil its historic mission in the present revolutionary epoch.

We have made but the first steps. We know that "it is necessary to consistently and patiently create conditions for a powerful advance, for the activity of socialist culture and art, for its ideological and Party character". Part of these conditions, of our powerful advance, will be the gradual ideological strengthening of our Union and the gradual expansion of our membership base. In our pre-Congress declaration, in November last year, we said: We extend our hand to all those who with their new works, their socialist works and civic attitude want to serve the aims common to our working people, to those who through the creation of values are transforming the world.

What does this principle mean? In accepting new members into the Union, we shall evaluate their works and their present civic attitudes; we shall assess how close they were to socialist art in the past and with what literary works they are returning on the road of socialist literature. This naturally should result in a well-considered perspective approach towards individual writers, even those who were temporarily disorientated but who have come to understand their incorrect attitudes, and who with their new works and their clear-cut political and civic action, will prove an active and creative attitude towards our socialist system and its class power. In promising instances, this well-considered and perspective approach should find a specific expression, for example in the form of an interview, an invitation to a meeting, social, creative event organised by the Union, an invitation to an anniversary celebration of writers, in

awarding prizes and so on. All people, including writers, are subject to influences of the society, and our society is developing successfully in all respects. Naturally, the whole art front also influences the writers. This is meant to say that we do not want to lose hope prematurely. The process of differentiation continues. To forestall events or to delay the formation of the Union's membership base would be harmful, it would weaken the organisation and strength of socialist literature.

However, writers who organised revisionist, anti-socialist campaign, who through their works, political activity in the leadership of the former Union or through public speeches unleashed anti-Party and anti-Soviet campaigns, cannot become members of the Union. Nor can writers who stand outside socialist art with their works be members of our Union.

Naturally, literature will arise also outside the new Union, because our ideologically creative writers' organisation must not be confused with some sort of special-interest unified trade union organisation of writers.

The principles which we mentioned in connection with building the Union's membership base, and which call for a prudent and differentiated approach, apply both to older writers, mostly members of the former Union, as well as to new and young authors. The leadership of the Union should pay special attention to young writers who are only entering the literary arena. In them lies the future of the Union, the future of socialist literature. The orientation and support of young writers is one of the most important tasks of our Union.

Comrades!

If the Czech Writers' Union is to fulfil its mission in our socialist society, it will be necessary to ensure its continuous activity and development. It will be necessary to continuously strengthen the Union, so that it may become a

live centre of a magnetic field which attracts all lines of force of the entire cultural public. We are facing an enormous amount of real pioneering work in this respect.

It is also necessary for our Union to have a reliable and efficient apparatus - solid foundations have already been laid for it, but it is necessary to strengthen the personnel, especially in leading positions, so that the staff be in keeping with the demanding ideological mission of the Union. A duty of the Union's members however is that they take part in its active work either in various commissions or in the editorial office of the Literary Monthly, or in fruitful participation in meetings and conferences.

The main thing of course is that all writers may feel that the new Union is becoming a significant cultural forum, and that they themselves will specifically stimulate and influence the development of our socialist literature from the platform of the Union. Conditions for this are created through a consistent fulfilment of the principles of the cultural policy laid down in the general line of the 14th Congress of the KSSR, and we shall fulfil them in a true, creative spirit of "Marxism-Leninism imbues all our work.

Comrades!

The basic prerequisites have again been established for renewing the socialist character of our literature. Let us therefore renew on a broad front the activity of creative socialist writers' forces in our nations. The subject of socialist literature is Man; Man and his place in the society, in the world; Man and his effort, the struggle for his emotional and spiritual wealth, Man the creator. Gorki's hungry love of Man, and human longing, the need of being better and of living better, are still qualities which should be the basis of our work in art. Socialism is the road of fight, of struggle for Man, and socialist art is its song. If we succeed in this difficult and responsible creative work, then Gorki's words saying that "Literature is the heart of the world, bewinged with all its joys and sorrows" will apply also to us.





## DISCUSSION SPEECH BY JIŘÍ TAUFER

We have just heard the principal Congress report delivered by Comrade Jan Kozák. To my mind undoubtedly the most important part of this comprehensive report was that dealing with an analysis of the activities of the former organization of Czechoslovak writers. For without such an analysis aimed at giving a critical view and judgment, nothing like an assessment of the present condition of Czech literature can even be thought of nor, consequently, a true estimate of the prospects. The analysis was and is necessary if we are all to reach some understanding of what had actually happened in the community of Czechoslovak and Czech writers in the past years. To make us realize that if after a time the new organization is not to turn once again into a closed, stuffy club with all the attendant vices of clubbing of the petty nature and spirit, into an association which at first creates the impression of much ado and of great activity while in fact it detracts from its proper activities and from the writer's mission, i. e. to live the most vivid reality and not by paper, to explore reality in its very essence whose one part is the condition, the spirit, and the truth of literature and art, and to ensure that the Union becomes a worthy component of the creative efforts of our entire society, then our present collectivity will have to be founded on different principles in order to really promote creative writing and not to weigh it down as a heavy burden.

I am in full agreement with the conception of Kozák's analysis which is of a high theoretical level, with its logical structure based on facts and therefore highly convincing,

and with its high degree of critical spirit. I therefore believe that it should become the ideological platform of the new Union for a long time to come. It has encompassed so many significant facts, it has raised so many acute theoretical problems that should only the most acute of the suggestions be taken up still here at the Congress, it probably would not finish before a week was out.

This is, therefore, what the Congress is about to give to the new writers' community as - don't let us call it a task but - as an appealing object of interest for a long time ahead. And let me repeat not as topics for various gatherings, internal talks, closed discussions and other forms of similar activity, but for literary work of a most genuine kind, such work as will have its impact upon the public. Indeed, no creation is conceivable without the critical element, and to understand a certain condition of literature - which always was, and will be, in undoubted correlation with society, whether as a specific kind of its reflection, or as a force with a feed-back effect on society, and to square up characterfully with what this correlation had been in the recent past, and why, what consequences stem from this for its immediate development, and what to do to make this development positive and fertile - this is a vital necessity, nay, directly a function of the complicated living organism that literature is.

All this is a theme worthy of engendering ideas, ideas with a fine positive impact, that will be incorporated not only in theoretical papers, studies in literary history or essays but in new poems, dramas and prose. And in the pages of our new "Literární měsíčník" (Literary Monthly) we shall have to revert to the grave partial problems that we are coming up against, and will continue to do at every step.

Thus let me recall such a phenomenon as the wave of de-popularization of our theatre, its de-democratization, that

formerly quite unimaginable transformation of this ancient expression of the grand popular c o l l e c t i v e n e s s of art into a preserve of snobs and of the snob-aping, stolid, uncultured petty bourgeois who may feel bored in the theatre, but is ever ready to make the sacrifice whenever he senses that he can pretend to be an oil magnate.

We should pay closer attention to the way a b s u r - d i t y which in the late Sixties had literally flooded our stage like a fashionable article that we simply could not afford not to possess in at least a Central European measure lest we should appear - God forbid! - like some backward boors - to the way this absurdity gradually began to assume certain elements of a contemptible content, i. e. elements of allegory and hidden sense in the service of the darkest of all reaction. The way this semblance of petty art, noisily advertised as non-tendentious, devoid of any ideology, allegedly "not subservient" art of purely esthetic values, gradually came to be endowed with a highly pronounced and definite ideological content.

Flaubert once wrote his "Éducation sentimentale"; what we should do is to ponder a while over many a work in our literature that in the last decade or so had been promoting education in the opposite direction, and education designed to deaden all feeling, one of sentimental cynicism; over books which repay any amount of deliberating on art in which eros, sex, attended by profound emotion conveys fine and abounding vitality as distinct from works that tend to express the exact opposite, i.e. something like vicious wrathful frigidity if, indeed, not something else. How thoroughly aesthetic sounds in this connection the metaphor of aged Théophile Gautier, once quoted by Nezval concerning mental eunuchism which, being incapable of admiration and affection for any kind of sensual and spiritual beauty, for the beauty of a woman, is incapable of anything else but of



showering her with libels and blows. Indeed, the petty provincial Louis Ferdinand Céline had, thanks to the tender care of the midwives of our criticism, multiplied with downright rabbit-like fertility!

We should also make a thorough analysis, say, of yet another phenomenon whose towering ludicrousness escaped attention, i. e. the fact that under the slogans of modernism or vanguardism the worst kind of passéism, of harking back to the past, was actually being cultivated, the worst kind of uninspired provincialism which put on airs of at least a pan-European brand claiming a range of vision trans-Jordanic; that the concept of artistic vanguard, which for Marxist literary scientists had always implied only artists linked up with the vanguard in the social sphere, i.e. a class-conscious vanguard, a revolutionary party of a modern proletariat, had gradually been vindicated to all kinds of eccentrics, curios, idealists, and down-right reactionaries.

And finally, there is yet another phenomenon that should engage our thorough attention, the phenomenon of ahistoricism widely spread among journalists in the latter half of the Sixties. At times mechanical transferring of facts out of other periods of history to the present day, pseudoscientific spinning of analogies was an expression of a vain endeavour to show off superficially picked up knowledge and to pass off fragments of haphazard knowledge as science.

However, in its entirety, this was to become one of the means of "proving" socialism to be unscientific, of running down socialism as anti-humanistic, uncultured, backward, as vandalism (literally so).

This would make a long story. Today I only wish to dwell on one case, typical and by no means accidental, one which was also been referred to by Comrade Kozák. It is the address given by M. Kundera at the 4th Congress of Czechoslovak Writers in June 1967, the address that was to set



the tune for the whole trend of discussion at the Congress and to become the theoretical and ideological groundwork of the integrated and well-developed conception of the entire further destructive activities of the bodies of the former Union, as deservedly referred to in the main report.

What Kundera did was to base his address on an article written, in 1886, by Hubert Gordon Schauer as the leading article of the first number of the "Č a s " magazine, and not only did he identify himself with the argumentation of this article but he went so far as to back up Schauerian "philosophy of national suicide" by quoting out of context pronouncements of great figures in the history of Czech culture, absolutely antagonistic in their way of thinking and their entire beings to everything Schauer stood for.

A person really doubts his own eyes and wonders whether this is only an expression of lack of education, or an eruption of boundless hatred when among Schauer's spiritual predecessors such names are mentioned as Palacký, Jan Kollár, or Jan Neruda, one of the purest, most optimistic national poets, this liberal democrat who while watching the first Prague May Day manifestation in 1890 could interpret it as "the May of human history", as "the most memorable day of human history as a whole." One is amazed to see with what impudent wilfulness or malevolence even the name of Matouš Klácel is indiscriminately stuck on to that of Schauer; Klácel, that victim of persecution by Catholicism and absolutism, this splendid Hegelian and militant atheist, an extraordinarily enlightened, for his day, author of "Letters of a Friend to a Lady Friend on the Origin of Socialism and Communism" (Listy přítele přítelkyni o původu socialismu a komunismu).

Kundera, though evidently paraphrasing one passage from Schauer's article "N a š e d v ě o t á z k y "

(Our Two Problems) had copied and updated Schauer's entire essay from beginning to the end, adding and having dyed from gray to black paragraphs from some of his other papers (e.g. O p r o d m ě n ě k á c h i m o ž n o s t i n á r o d n ě ě e s k ě l i t e r a t u r y - On the Conditions and Possibilities of a Czech National Literature, etc.).

The core of Schauer's article lies in the idea that there might come a day (giving a literal quotation) "when one man or another - say a weakling - might ask himself: How now, is this existence of questionable nationality really worth wasting all the powers of my intellect ... by making efforts so far totally negative? Could we not attach ourselves to the intensive and extensive spiritual life of a great nation, and do more for humanity as well as ourselves ...? And finally: is our national existence really worth the effort, is its culture so magnificent?

And here we have the core of the question which is: Is our national store really so large as to inspire fighters in that extreme case with sufficient moral encouragement, to instil them with an absolute conviction that if they preserve the people for their own language they will also preserve them for an intellectual world of their own, that alienation from the mother tongue would truly be an ethical loss, that by doing so they will preserve a type which occupies a firm, valid, and independent place in the Pantheon of mankind?" And further on: "If this external mechanism, though it may appear to be functioning so well, is called a nation, then in the eyes of the thinker this social phenomenon does not deserve the name of nation ... Indeed, have we not been throughout the course of our history in close indissoluble contact with the West, and to use a disreputable

expression, an offshoot of Germany? . . . Does this five-million figure of Czech-speaking population safeguard our future, are we safeguarded by our intelligentsia, our literature, and the whole of our national machinery from the potential future - however remote and improbable at the moment - denationalization, or overnationalization?" And if in the same article we read the author's reflection "whether the moment has not already come, or is not about to come, when we shall start transferring the accumulated store of latent energy by living oscillations on to the Slavonic world" - will it not occur to us that here is an idea which must have thrilled the congenial minds of the adherents of present-day ideologic and political theory of "bridges"?

This is a substantial part of "Our Two Problems". If this was the way the young, then only twenty-four years old, Schauer thought in the mid-Eighties of last century it was actually nothing more than an expression of extreme pessimism culminating in despair which rightly came to be called the philosophy of suicide. However, this can be understood provided we realize two aspects of the problems explored by Schauer: The first, the question of personality, Schauer's peculiar disposition deriving from lack of national anchorage, lack of roots, or, yet more precisely, complete absence of roots (half-German origin, educated in Vienna, bilingual feeling), by his high and unsatisfied scientific and downright thinker's aspirations stimulated by his - for his day undoubtedly extensive - knowledge, his wide range of vision, his erudition.

This aspect of Schauer's personality has to be linked with the other aspect of his set of problems, i. e. with the times in which Schauer lived, the period of then obtaining conditions of national existence in Austria-Hungary, the



period characterized by the existing state of solution of language equality, of autonomy, of international legal recognition of the so-called St. Wenceslas Crown, of the existence and competence of the Land Parliament, etc., with the times in which Schauer in his own way, despairingly and misleadingly for his day, posed the question what was to be done "that we may constitute an economic, and possible also c u s t o m s individuality".

By the whole of his conservative way of thinking Schauer belonged to the Old Czechs movement of the Rieger type, and his conception of both the national and social question was abstract, a priori, construed. Thus, though with a certain envy, he speaks of the "Hegelian Byelinski" as of a typical Russian phenomenon (though Schauer's knowledge of Russian literature was derived from French and German sources, particularly from Ferdinand Kurenberg) - he n e v e r did understand Palacky's historical work, and the Czech national past which to him appeared fragmentary, incomplete and mysterious, which he compared to "African rivers of which we know only a part, and then not a large part until, all of a sudden, it reappears to us once more"; as to the history of the Czech nation he declared it to be "inadequately explored" and, in individual periods, "absolutely incomprehensible", admitting (On Conditions and Possibilities of Czech National Literature) that the spirit of the Czech nation as it had appeared throughout the centuries was "inaccessible to him in its true character".

His socio-philosophical views were a queer mixture of theology and idealized ancient sophocracy in society (no wonder then that he had attracted the attention of our proselytes of elitism!) and ideal expressed unequivocally in his article " D e m o k r a t i z a c e u m é n í " (Democratization of Art, written in 1890) in his words that for him democracy was not "a rule of the lower, u n e d u c a t e d strata, but mutual permeation of all strata, an



organic unity which will develop from this permeation, mutual exchange of varying potentialities, an all-embracing balance". He was terrified of the horrors of class struggle, and advised "the ruling classes" that if they were to win this struggle they would have to allow the spirit of idealism and religion to fill their beings, and that they should try to influence the lower classes in the same way ...". And the above-mentioned article ends with the following exclamation: "Democratism is nationalism".

In his philosophy Schauer was close to neo-Kantism, or - as he had written - "the modern movement, theological and philosophical", whose propagation he regarded as a "powerful means of unifying the mind" and as "a substantial element of an integrated, generous, and thus also fertile view of the world, of life and religion, a view of the future. It is - he concludes - "criticism" in the field of philosophy, and in the field of religion mainly the new, ever advancing tendency in German Protestant theology".

Kundera was guilty of a certain legerdemain when he paraphrased Šalda's opinion of Schauer in his article on the occasion of Schauer's death in 1892. Šalda's article (included in his *Juvenilia*) is, of course, an obituary, and in this way its overall tone has to be understood. However, there is no truth in Kundera's claim that in the article Šalda singles out Schauer as "the greatest figure of his generation. (The first sentence of Šalda's obituary actually runs as follows: "Perhaps the purest and the highest talent of the whole young generation"); Kundera's claim, above all, does not correspond with the whole further content and tenor of that article of Šalda's, which is highly critical particularly as regards the potentialities and limitations of Schauer's talent.

Thus, for instance, Schauer's receptive, reproductive, perceptual and passive analysis is characterized by Šalda as being "narrow and constrained". He writes that where the subject is more complex, when not individuals but entire categories, are concerned, not elements but processes - there Schauer's "purely comprehensive understanding does not cope, nor does it reach far enough", and that instead of a penetrating intellect Schauer shows what the French call *raison raisonnée*, that is reasoning reason, "taking note of movements and resultants rather than processes". Onesidedness, subjectivity, abstract speculation - these are characteristics of H. G. Schauer whom Šalda summarizes as "a philosopher rather moralistic than historical, legal, and social".

The most poignant disappointment is in store for anyone perusing, after so many years, in the three volumes of Schauer's *Works* (arranged and published by Arnošt Procházka in 1917), the section containing his literary critiques. How obvious it is in these writings that the risk of the critic's reputation ever demanded by Šalda, and here undergone by Schauer, ended in damaging the critic's reputation under the severe glance of Time. How it is just here, in judgments on actual works of art, that Schauer's lack of feeling for the organic structure of Czech poetic language is most obvious, predomination of contemplation of the intellectual exterior over the feeling of a fundamental unity between thought and form. Thus, with Schauer it is Klášterský who surpasses not only Svatopluk Čech but Vrchlický as well!

I should not detain my distinguished audience with such an extensive interpretation of a transient phenomenon, one inexorably and rightly relegated to oblivion by history, were it not really important to see what all those things were, and especially why, which had served as an

ideological arsenal for launching an attack against socialism by the social yesterday. I cannot forego quoting yet another document printed in the Supplement to the "Works of H. G. Schauer" as being so characteristic of the degenerate way of thinking on the part of members of the most contemporary Coblenz emigrés and of the latest Czechoslovak "Coblenz screech-owls", those calamity-howlers, in particular. These are excerpts from Schauer's letters to a friend (written in the same year as *Our Two Problems*, i. e. in 1886), in which this man torn in two, rootless, a prototype of a cosmopolitan by his very being, desperately seeking and never finding nurturing soil in the illusion of nationalism, after all the abstract accusations levelled against the alleged lack of energy in the Czech nation finally confesses to a lack of energy in himself.

" . . . Vienna has never had nationalism . . . it is glued together from too variegated elements . . . If it were German, body and soul, to its last pulse, in all its flame - perhaps I might feel at home here, not because it would be German but because it would be national: enthusiastic and generous . . . By a complex and painful process of reasoning I have now become convinced that in one nation or another - let us say at once in the Czech - I cannot fulfil my mission, I cannot develop freely, I cannot radiate my influence into the distance and into all three dimensions of space. At the same time, however, I am becoming convinced that I can fulfil my mission within another nation, e. g. just the German, that only there can I find the necessary environment for myself as a scientist, as a man, etc. . . ."

I repeat: Schauer's case can be explained in the correlation of his peculiar mental make-up and of his times, and perhaps even understood as it has been illustrated by these passages and by the above article quite rightly condemned



at the time and since then deservedly blown away by history like a piece of yellowed paper. But how is one to understand a young Czech man, and a poet of the latter half of the twentieth century at that, having unearthed this tragic human document of a case of moral apostacy and glorified it into a sort of creed of the Czech nation in 1967? Is this a coincidence, or not? To my mind, this was not accidental. I see this in the whole attitude of this man whose esthetization of a cynical attitude to life, to human polity, to work, to woman, to love, to eroticism - in his works of fiction - and his would-be philosophizing of a cynical attitude to the heroic and splendidly inevitable course of Czech national history - in his essays and journalism - these are all of one piece, of one source. In Hájek's recent critique of Kundera's prose this attitude to life has been fittingly called the "R a s t i g n a c a t t i - t u d e" (rastignacovština). I will revert to the term I used at the outset and am going to use it here again; I will say this is a case of the "Céline attitude" (célinovština) since, in opposition to the classical Balzac type of a rapacious parvenu, it involves not only a type of modern tartuffery, nor a mind no longer capable of anything than a grinning pleasure over decay, over disfiguring of the human being, pleasure over people coming to despise themselves in disgust, their relationships, despairing of any possibility of their intentions and deeds, their feelings, their altruism and their desires being pure and genuine, but at the same time involving spirit of defeatism and capitulation whether social, national, or human.

It is hard, if not literally nauseating, work to go once again through the pages of the records of the 4th and the following Congresses as through the other documents, "messages", manifestations and bulletins of the former Union. At times one no longer feels like underlining the



utmost nonsense and vulgarities in them. Nor like quoting any more from Kundera's address. Yet how is one not to quote when you come across the statement that while most nations feel their existence as a matter of course, the self-evidence of the existence of the Czech nation is claimed to be nothing but a case of self-deception? According to Kundera, in the past the Czech nation, having allegedly had no national culture of its own, "educated themselves to become Europeans" only on European literatures being carried over to this country. In one period only is Czech literature claimed to have gone through a time of bloom - this having been, in Kundera's view, in the twenty years of the First Republic - yet even this does not, under Kundera's judicial eye, prove its worth except as a period of adolescence rather than maturity of Czech literature - just imagine. Kundera harps on his ridiculous term of "European citizenship" and claims that this citizenship of Czechs is "an eternal either-or". That is to say: "Either allow the Czech language to lose its vitality and degenerate into a mere European dialect/!/, and their culture into mere European folk-lore, or to be one of the European nations including everything this entails." He goes on to compare without scruples Nazi occupation with the period of the establishment of the socialist order in Czechoslovakia, and summarily dismisses both of these periods as interruptions of Czech cultural development. It is only in recent times, i. e. in the latter half of the Sixties, that he seems to discern indications of a cultural rise and - of the opening up of the grand perspectives of integration when the development of mankind would for the first time merge into unified world history".

Of course, Kundera would not be true to himself if, having outlined his (and of course not only his!)

perspectives of integrating the European socialist countries into the system of the pan-European "great democracies", he did not pour a cold shower upon the heads of his fellow-citizens by pointing out that "there arises a kind of mass "travellership" /!/. which tends to increase the importance of a few main world languages, and - "the field of activity of the languages of small nations becomes more and more restricted". Nor would our petty parochial little Céline remain true to himself should he not season this philosophy with a perfectly beery joke saying that the Pilsner beer that is allegedly making us world famous is in any case being sold abroad with labels couched in foreign languages, which of course he claims "will not justify the claims of Czechs to a language of their own" /!/. However, after this joke, for which the notorious Mr. Matěj Brouček, could have been ashamed, our tourism-promoting "kulturträger" once again resumes the tone of a European thinker who addresses himself to the nation with an awful cry worthy of a prophet and reminding mankind of the Last Judgment: "The future of the gradually integrating world shall inexorably and quite justifiably demand a rendering of accounts to justify the e x i s t e n c e which we have chosen, asking w h y w e h a v e c h o s e n i t . "

After this bombastic apocalypse fit for cheap colour prints one could burst out laughing, yes, indeed, if of course we did not vividly remember that the Congress - with the possible exception of a single unequivocal and brave stand by the poet Lajčák - had glorified this balderdash as nothing short of gigantic ideas, which is not so surprising, and that - which is none the less startling - the various commentators of that Congress, including, one is sorry to say, in the Communist Press too (even in a commentary of the Rudé právo) swallowed up these absurdities lock, stock and barrel. Another conclusive proof that the crisis which broke out six months

later had had its latent dispositions in the body of our whole society.

I have already mentioned how Kundera had trimmed Šalda's obituary to suit his purposes. However, there is yet another, and even more significant, document in Šalda's "Works" testifying that Šalda, with a rare piece of self-criticism in which - as we know - he never over-indulged, reverted, after eighteen years, to his attitude to Schauer, and this time stated it once and for all. This concerns Šalda's reply to the article *Úkol českého národa* (The Task of the Czech Nation) published in 1910 in which Emanuel Chalupný proceeding from Šalda's study called "*Hodnoty kultury a mocnosti života*" (Values of Culture and the Powers of Life) had referred to Šalda as a neo-Schauerian. Šalda's response was that Chalupný was right in repudiating Schauer's well-known article published in the "Čas" magazine - being particularly apt in one point, namely where "Schauer had decidedly underestimated the importance of a nation's language". For, in Šalda's view, "a nation's language is decidedly, infinitely more than a mere external means of expression, more than a instrument of thought, national language is, to a considerable extent, the embodied national idea itself". "This is what I had myself taken an exception to orally, to Schauer himself, quoting to him the well-known Turgenev's poem in prose ...". Here Šalda is voicing his most vehement protest against the charge of being a neo-Schauerian, and goes on: "I never completely agreed with Schauer's theory, not even in my earliest youth, and as I grew to maturity, I deviated from it more and more, and today I am its direct antipode." Šalda always saw - as he says - the schoolboy pedantism, the dull lack of vitality of Schauer's theory, and this time he added words which are so beautiful and strong that I take



them as Salda's answer, from the distance of six decades, to our own "neo-Schauerians": The nation is no rotten sail to be able to attach itself and cling to a foreign culture and a foreign language; nationality is no glove which can be exchanged for another. "To attach oneself", that is - speaking without euphemism - to out run, and betray, which can be done only by individuals, and then only by uncreative weaklings, a strong creative man is incapable of even imagining this, just as he is unable to visualize crippling himself deliberately." He goes on to explain to Chalupný that his questions in the treatise "Cultural Values and the Powers of Life" applied neither to national existence, nor the existence of our national literature, which is - as he says - a cardinal difference between his own and Schauer's point of view, but that they had been concerned with the question of "how far this literature is, or is not, will or will not be, culture-creating", which is to be understood as creating culture the moment "we have developed enough love and managed to turn solitary work into a collective labour of joy and faith in life, fragments into a whole, a chance and an exception into law." Whereupon there follows a passage that sounds as a most topical and direct reply to the Kunderas and their associates, and that we all here, I am convinced, can endorse with Salda: "I cannot make do," writes Salda, "with the mere fact of national culture, what I demand, and must demand, from it are culture-creating powers, and I do not require these powers of creating culture of it for the sake of foreign nations, for some kind of abstract humanity or some abstract civilization, culture, European art, world public, or other Utopia, but for myself, for our - as I was . . . For me such general science and general art is a pedantic ludicrousness of the Schauerian type. Fortunately enough, the nation is no commis voyageur

to be concerned about what will be said about it in some European newspaper café or gossip-mongering place . . . I demand culture, not for parading it in Europe, not for "general progress" - but simply for myself, for us. And this because we wish to live proudly, with full powers, magnanimously, and not half-heartedly and down-trodden. What I demand from our literature is not that it gives Shakespeares, Goethes and Balzacs to the world- if Europe cares for these, of which incidentally I have my doubts - let it seek them where it will - but I do demand that it provides me with a joyful song of the working estate that is served by hundreds of hands and hearts, and not some disharmonious, petty croaking of a jealous frog pond."

I

Indeed, it must have been already at the end of the Sixties, that the diseased foci in our society started their baneful work in our society and weakened its whole organism. How otherwise would it have been possible not to have perceived that such historical and philosophical conceptions - which would have given so much delight to the late Theodor Mommsen, or Professor Jos. Pfitzner, more recently deceased - were not only in sharp contradiction with the facts of our entire history, that they are a mockery of the enormous labour exerted, findings ascertained not only by generations of revivalists, scientists, poets, artists, pedagogues, but by whole national generations, that such attempts to resuscitate Schauerism produce a downright comical effect when applied to our twentieth-century history.

For in the foundations of our national revival in 1918, which represents a stage of bringing to fruition the sense of our national struggles, a magnificent confirmation of

national vitality and consequently a strong denial of Schauer's pessimistic hypothesis of the futility of the nation's will to live despite everything - in the base of this national revival of ours there lies - not as a cold lifeless foundation stone but as a glowing core - the epoch-making historical fact of the first socialist revolution. It was this revolution that brought about the first, heretofore unseen social break in the world and, at the same time, furnished a theoretical and practical solution to the liberation of nations. It smashed not only the notorious tsarist jail of nations bringing independence to already historically constituted nations possessing a highly developed literature and their specific cultures, but it liberated hundreds and hundreds of nationalities, helping them to constitute languages differentiated into dialects and maintained by oral tradition alone into true national, literary languages with a grammatical structure and a vocabulary, and also to give them, for the first time in their history, the possibility to create written literatures of their own. It was the October Revolution that hurled this flaming torch into the world, and thanks to this the Czech and the Slovak nations too, embarked upon a new stage of their history which they had earned by torments of hell worthy of nothing but deep esteem and admiration, which can never be belittled by any kind of baseness of pretentious ignorance, cynical contempt, or bombastic sermonizing.

And it was also the October Revolution that awakened to life the most vivid force of modern nations, including the Czech nation, i. e. the working class, and stirred into life the dormant, lulled consciousness of its inevitable, objective historical mission. In the twenty years of the bourgeois order the highly developed revolutionary working class of Czechoslovakia really came to represent - without any conscious effort on its part - the "European



character", or, I would say the world renown of the Czech and Slovak nations in those years, as progressive nations thinking not thanks to some "integration" but animated by the international revolutionary idea.

And while on the subject of Schauerism galvanized at the 4th Congress of Czechoslovak writers it should be mentioned that already in those interwar years the only true representatives of the Czech nation were never speculators in stocks and shares, representatives of administration councils and of all kinds of economic and political cartels, travelling in international trains in pursuit of their international financial and political machinations, nor the bored travellers of both sexes bound for the Rivas and for world-renowned seaside resorts, but the revolutionary working class and the masters of culture who had joined their ranks and were waging, in their homeland and often beyond its borders on an international scale, a grand and fine struggle of solidarity on all frontlines of the battle against war, against chauvinism, fascism, imperialism, and colonial oppression.

And if in the twenty years of the First Republic an art of truly "European format" was actually born - although I am not convinced of the truth of this being the case only in those twenty years, but rather much earlier and later on as well - then it was again only because the artists who were primarily creators of this art were so very close to, if not right in the ranks of the revolutionary movement, whose spirit had, in one way or another, inspired their heads and their hearts.

I wish to be as brief as possible, but I cannot refrain from repeating what the philistine with a blasé smile calls the alphabetical truth that had been turned into an empty phrase: that is, that but for the strong revolutionary working-class movement in Czechoslovakia, but for its firm

bonds with the first country of socialism the destinies of the nation would have undoubtedly been different; when we know how the national bourgeoisie putting into practice the Schauerian thesis on "democratism equalling nationalism" - scrupulously "integrated" Hitlerite marks along with nationalism. It was the revolutionary working class which overcame - and is overcoming again today - the residue of the great internal danger in the nation, i. e. the danger of reaction within ourselves which Zdeněk Nejedlý pointed out (already in his article "Lidové pokrokové" /In a Popular and Progressive Way/, which was the leading article of the first number of the "Vár" magazine in 1921), describing this danger as being worse than all other external dangers, since internal reaction will always eventually find its support outside.

And let Kundera and those close to him bandy about as much as they like the term (incidentally, one taken over from the arsenal of Trotskyism) of "Stalinism" in the USSR or of "Stalinism" of a certain Czechoslovak variety, during the half century history of the work of the Soviet Union, so many times criminally marred by world imperialism and so many times heroically renewed and repeatedly resumed, and the history of the socialist order in Czechoslovakia, in spite of all its straying follies and all too human mistakes despite all the attempts of pusillanimous yesterday to thwart the building of the present and the future - is one fine and noble history of a social, and thus also national, renouveau of nations containing the splendid dialectics of the true unification of mankind. Entirely in the spirit of Marx's exact prediction in his "Class Struggles in France" in the chapter on the June defeat in 1848: "The fate . . . of national revolutions has come to depend on the fate of the proletarian

revolution, gone is their apparent self-sufficiency and independence of a great social upheaval. No Hungarian, Pole, nor Italian will be free as long as the worker remains a slave."

X

From the conception of the 4th Congress of Writers to which the ideological-political key had been set by the contribution we have been analyzing here, there was then a direct line to such creations and pronouncements in which this way of thinking had been applied to its full consequences. Let us recall all journalistic work in the Press organs of the Union, let us recall, for instance, such a film as "K o č á r d o V í d n ě" (The Coach to Vienna), or the well-known discussion called through primitive ignorance of the right grammatic form and the meaning of the Greek word "dialogue" - T r i a l o g u e . It is already in this discussion that the antifascist struggle is openly and shamefully defamed as a myth created by what is termed "convulsive" and "greedy" attempt of the Czech nation "to share in the inheritance"; it is there that, with such perfidy and brutality as may be encountered only in some dirty brochures of memoirs written by former Nazis, the most unheard-of libels of the Soviet armies fighting, already on our territory battles that meant the last weeks and hours of the terrible war unleashed by fascism, and at the same time, the end of the humiliation and gradual destruction of our nations, were being said and printed. There even the transfer carried out after 1945 is made to mean that by doing this "we disparaged the political traditions of the correctness of Beneš's foreign policy", that "in one stroke we crossed off these traditions of a humane and cultural solution" and that allegedly Czechoslovakia will have to put in order its relations with the German nation", otherwise we cannot draw up any perspective for ourselves!



In view of all the absurdity of the passages quoted, which might have warmed the heart of the notorious "President in exile" dr. Becher with brotherly feelings towards the three debaters, today the whole "debate" would seem ridiculous were we not to recall in retrospect what an audacious and very premeditated high game was being played here.

You will no doubt remember the articles harping on the topic of "the fatal Czech question". And once again, we have here the same insolent ahistoricism being applied in the services of "an end that justifies all means".

Can it be denied that by the victory of the antifascist coalition in which the Soviet Union played the decisive role, that by the crushing of the Third Reich an entirely different situation finally arose in Europe, which turns "the fateful Czech question" into an empty phrase that no historian should ever utter?

Not to mention the outstanding fact of the present gigantic role of the Soviet Union in the contemporary world, not to mention the splendid fact of alliance with the Soviet Union, distinguished by its being no longer conditioned or tied up by terms at the mercy of the Western Powers, of whose reliability we in Czechoslovakia so cruelly convinced ourselves in the autumn of 1938. Nor do I wish to mention here another enormous change on the h i s t o r i c a l, the geographical map of Europe, which is represented by the European socialist system. I have particularly in mind the rise of the socialist German state on the territory of the former German Reich, which has also become one of the three classical countries of socialism. Does not this also substantially alter even the so-called "eternal German question" with which the so-called "fatality" of the Czech question had been so closely bound up in the past?

With what "German nation" did they seek "to come to terms", and not only those three "eminent men" but the whole of our reaction? Was it with the inhabitants of the GDR whose Party and state leadership, that handful of Communists having returned from concentration camps and from emigration after twelve years, and exerting superhuman effort worthy of profound esteem and admiration, cured, made whole the vast masses of people poisoned and bent by nazism, and laid the foundations for building a healthy society worthy of the German genius of Goethe, Beethoven, Humboldt, Heine, Marx and Engels? With the GDR whose political leadership has never allowed anyone to nurture the spirit of "a defeated country", and has never permitted the defeat of Hitlerite Germany to be interrupted in any other way than that corresponding to the full historical truth as the liberation of the German nation from darkness and humiliation, as the r e s t o r a t i o n to it of honour and true national greatness? With the GDR whose Party and state leadership has never allowed anyone to run down in any way whatever the main author of the defeat of nazism - the USSR? With the GDR which our "progressists" abused in indiscriminate terms - or with a fictitious nation represented by West German financiers, emissaries of the excellent Mr. Becher, cheaters who still feed on hopes of a revanche, and who at the turn of the Sixties were being received by them as well as by their - then official - spokesmen with open arms? I believe there is no doubt about with whom our reaction went in those days.

It might appear paradoxical that all these originally nationally nihilistic, self-flagellating conceptions of renewed Schauerism turned almost in a flash into noisy nationalistic ones the moment opposition was encountered by the intentions of their plotters to unleash one of those grievous masterpieces of ignorance which had occurred, and are still occurring in history, when people fighting for their liberation,

thrown at the mercy of their enemies, battered down by lies which a thousand times repeated come to appear to them as the truth - turn against their own liberation, and when the populace - betrays the people. It may appear paradoxical but it involves the unrelenting dialectics of history. For whenever, the possibility of non-existence of socialism is at stake then the internationally tied up bourgeoisie always comes out with its national flags. Marx was absolutely right when he said that class domination is no longer in a position to reliably camouflage itself in national costume; for when opposing the proletariat national governments are always united.

I wish to apologize for the length of my contribution. However, I did want to point out one problem, the problem of ahistoricism and of artificial historical parallels and analogies, which had also been part of that vast blizzard of lies hiding behind its frosty veil the true face of the creeping rebellion of social have-beens. And not merely to point it out but also to throw a little light on it.

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